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BENGALURU
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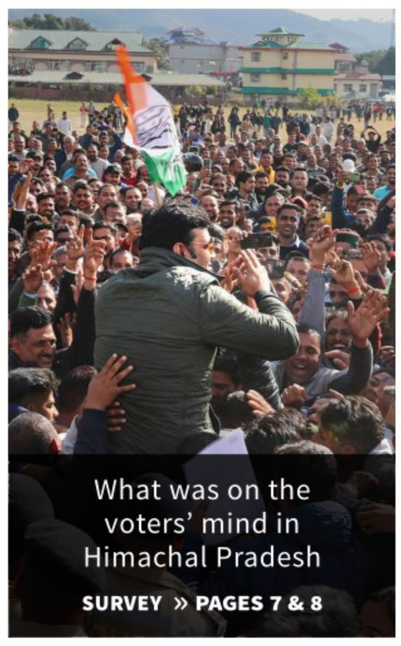
ONE OF A BREED

A genetic makeover for Uttarakhand's Badri cow

Govt. is looking to enhance productivity of the petite cow that grazes on herbs in the Himalayas and yields rich milk

NEWS » PAGE 9

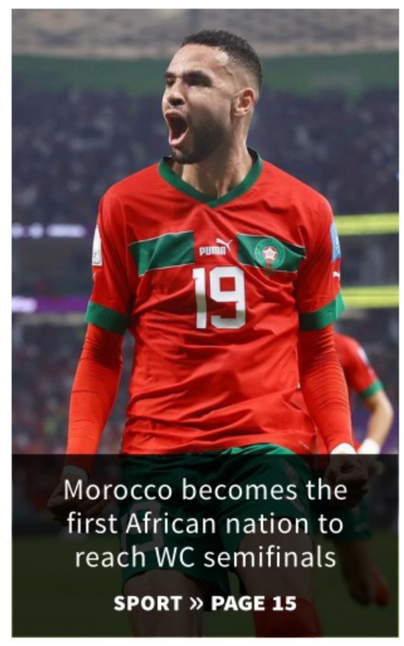


What was on the voters' mind in Himachal Pradesh

SURVEY » PAGES 7 & 8

India must play a big role in helping Afghans, says Ahmad Massoud

MAGAZINE » PAGES 4 &5



Morocco becomes the first African nation to reach WC semifinals

SPORT » PAGE 15

Rocket-type grenade fired at Punjab police station

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

Unidentified assailants fired a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) at a police station building in Punjab's Tarn Taran district on Friday night. No one was injured. The police hinted at Pakistan's hand in the attack. Citing the poor law and order situation, the Opposition parties sought the resignation of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann. The police station is situated on the Amritsar-Bathinda highway.

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CLASSIFIEDS » PAGES 4 & 5
MAGAZINE » 8 PAGES

Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu is Himachal Pradesh CM

Congress leadership makes the announcement after two days of deliberations, MLAs meet Governor Arlekar to stake claim to form government; swearing-in ceremony scheduled for today

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH

Two days after the Congress won 40 seats in the 68-member Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly, the party announced Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu as the new Chief Minister.

Mukesh Agnihotri, who was Leader of the Opposition in the outgoing Assembly, has been named Deputy Chief Minister.

After two days of deliberations over names of several contenders – including Pratibha Singh, wife of the late six-time CM Virbhadra Singh – the party high command pencilled in Mr. Sukhu for the top post. The Congress Legislature Party meeting held on Saturday elected Mr. Sukhu as its leader. The MLAs met Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar to stake claim to form the government. The swearing-in is slated for December 11.

Consensus finally: Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, centre, will be sworn in as Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh on Sunday. PTI

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Patel to be sworn in as Gujarat CM tomorrow

AHMEDABAD
Bhupendra Patel will continue as the Chief Minister of Gujarat, with the BJP MLAs electing him as the leader of the legislature party on Saturday. He will be sworn in as the Chief Minister on December 12. » PAGE 9

Cyclone claims 5 lives in T.N., uproots hundreds of trees

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Crossing the north Tamil Nadu coast near Mamallapuram during the early hours of Saturday with fierce winds and heavy rain, Cyclone Mandous claimed five lives, uprooted about 500 trees and caused power disruptions till Saturday afternoon in many areas in Chennai. Of the five persons who died, four were electrocuted.

Heavy rain pounded several areas in north Tamil Nadu that fell in the cyclone's path, particularly in and around Chennai. Vembakkam in Tiruvannamalai district received a whopping 25 cm of rainfall during the 24-hour period which ended at 8.30 a.m. on Saturday.

Path of destruction: A battered village near Mamallapuram after Cyclone Mandous made landfall on Friday night. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Cyclone Mandous had emerged as a strong cyclone, as it maintained a wind speed of 65-75 kmph, gusting to 85 kmph, as it made landfall. The storm moved at a speed of 12-14 kmph and made landfall between 11.30 p.m. on Friday and 1.30 a.m. on Saturday.

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HEAVY SHOWERS IN A.P.
» PAGE 6

Govt. will soon issue circular renaming 'Salaam Aarati' as 'Aarati Namaskara': Jolle

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The State government will soon issue a circular renaming 'Salaam Aarati' ritual followed in some temples in Karnataka as 'Aarati Namaskara', Shashikala Jolle, Minister for Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments, has said.

It is believed that the ritual was named by 18th century Mysore king Tipu Sultan during his visits to those temples.

'Abolish rituals'

The decision comes after Hindutva outfits urged the State government to abolish the rituals "performed in the name of Tipu Sultan" at some temples.

The decision was taken after a meeting of Karnataka Dharmika Parishat, and a separate circular would be issued by the government soon, said the Minister.

"The official circular will be issued to all temples following this ritual to continue with it but rename 'Salaam Aarati' as 'Aarati Namaskara'," Ms. Jolle told *The Hindu*.

Kashekodi Suryanarayana Bhat, member of the parishat, said that such rituals were performed in well-known temples, including Kukke Sri Subrahmanya Temple, Sri Mahalingeshwara Temple at Puttur, Mookambika Temple at Kollur and a few others during evenings.

Earlier the Vishwa Hindu Parishad had urged the Kollur temple authorities to go for "course correction" and call the ritual "pradosha pooje."

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 2

Delhi's first transgender councillor dreams big

After long years of struggle, 38-year-old Bobi makes it to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi

Nikhil M. Babu
NEW DELHI

About 23 years ago, Bobi started dancing and singing on the streets of Sultanpuri in northwest Delhi with a group of transgender people at weddings for money. Fast forward to December 7, Ms. Bobi, 38, took out a rally on the same streets, standing on a jeep with garlands around her neck and dozens of supporters raising slogans for her. For she just won the election on Aam Aadmi Party ticket to become the first transgender councillor in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. "Hindu, Muslim, and everyone should live peacefully. Now problems (between them) are increasing," she says.

"I want to work for the rights of my *kinnar* community and I also want to build an old-age home for them. But first, I will work on cleaning my area, fixing sewers, and parks."

Making waves: AAP councillor Bobi outside her residence in the Sultanpuri-A ward on Saturday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

While the journey so far, since she was asked to leave her house at the age of 14, has been difficult enough, winning a place in the capital's civic body has not made it all that easier, she says. "During the election campaign, some people said that 'she is a *kinnar*, *hijra*, *chakka*' and even after winning the election, some people said that '*arey, hijra ko jita diya*' (You have elected a eunuch)," Ms. Bobi, who identifies herself as a social worker, said at her house in Sultanpuri. Ms. Bobi ventured into social work at the age of 24, when she joined an NGO. When the AAP was born, she joined the party as well. While most of the people *The Hindu* met in her area attributed her success to the popularity of party chief Arvind Kejriwal, some say her service as a social worker had something to do with it too.

Ms. Bobi has faced such discrimination and more from a very young age. Born in a poor Scheduled Caste (SC) family in Delhi, Ms. Bobi lost her father when she was 10-12 years of age. Her mother had to take up menial jobs to raise her and her younger brother. Soon after, she found herself confronting the reality of her identity. "When I was about 14 years of age, I started asking myself 'What am I?' Since many students and people around me called me *kinnar*, *hijra* etc. I used to get sad. What could I do?" she recounts, adding that she eventually dropped out of school. Her family asked her to leave the house so that she would not "spoil" her brother's life. Luckily for Ms. Bobi, it was then that her '*Guruji*' Babita, a fellow transwoman and mentor, found her. "She took me and gave me the love of a mother and father," Ms. Bobi says. It has been five years since Ms. Bobi stopped dancing on the streets. Now, she is a '*guru*' herself with around 20 '*chelas*' in her care.

A BG-BGE

Mock attack: Advanced jet trainer Hawks fires flares simulating an attack as part of the Navy Day celebrations off the coast of Visakhapatnam. K.R. DEEPAK

Cresting the waves

Navy Day on December 4 was marked by ceremonies and operations demonstrations to showcase how India's maritime territorial integrity is protected

Navy Day is celebrated on December 4 to commemorate the decisive victory of the force at sea during the 1971 war against Pakistan. On December 4, 1971, as part of Operation Trident, Indian missile boats led an attack on the Karachi harbour and destroyed many Pakistani warships.

Navy Day pays homage to the martyrs of that war. The day begins at the Eastern Naval Command with a wreath-laying ceremony at the War Memorial on Beach Road in Visakhapatnam. The Command organises an operations demonstration on R.K. Beach in the city, where naval might is showcased for the public and the family members of the naval personnel.

This year, the demonstration was organised more elaborately, as President Droupadi Murmu, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, was the chief guest. This was the first time that a President attended the Navy Day programme of the Eastern Command. She was hosted by the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral R. Hari Kumar.

Fifteen warships, including *INS Jalashwa*, the biggest amphibious transport dock of the Navy, and the sail training ship *INS Tarangini*, were part of the show by the naval flotilla. After showcasing their manoeuvrability at sea, the ships were lit with decorative lights to present a stunning image against the fading blue skyline.

All air assets in the inventory of the Indian Navy such as the advanced jet trainer Hawk, fighter MiG 29-K, multi-mission aircraft P-8I, maritime surveillance aircraft Dornier and helicopters such as Chetaks, UH 3H and ALH, performed a flypast and aerobatics, captivating the audience with their speed and skill.

The highlight of the show was the beach assault enacted by the Marine Commandos (Marcos). Two LCMs (landing craft mechanised) were part of the exercise. Para jumpers showcased their precision landing skills from a height of over 9,000 feet.

The show ended with fireworks and a performance by the naval band and a brief concert by the trio Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy.

At the Gateway of India, Mumbai, a beating retreat and tattoo ceremony was organised by the Western Naval Command. The show included an operations demo, flypast by naval helicopters, a performance by the naval band and a continuity drill by the Navy sailors.

Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari was the chief guest at Western Command ceremony and he was hosted by the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Command, Vice-Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh.

Step lively: Girls from the Sea Cadet Corps perform the hornpipe dance during the Beating Retreat and Tattoo ceremony at the Gateway of India, Mumbai. EMMANUAL YOGINI

In tandem: Members of the 22nd Missile Vessel Squadron perform the continuity drill in Mumbai. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Sparks fly: An advanced jet trainer Hawk leaves a trail of flares in the sky over Visakhapatnam. V. RAJU

INBRIEF

Power shutdown between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m today

There will be disruption in power supply on December 11, Sunday, between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. in the following areas owing to maintenance work. According to a release, from Bescom, East Circle, the areas that will be affected are: Broadway Road, Cockburn Road, Station Road, Queens Road, Miller's Road, Cunningham Road, Aliasker road, Aliasker Road Cross, Thimmaiah Road, Chick Bazar Road, Venkatappa Road, Muniswamy Road, Payappa Garden, Cemetery Road, Park Road, Nala Road, Noha street, Queens Road, Chandini Chowk. Miller Tank Bund Road, Jasma Bhavan Road, Sultanji gunta Road, Haines Road, Dhanakotilane, Neharupuram, Muthyalamma Koil Street, Mackan Compound Road, N.P. Street, Seppings Road, New market Road, OPH Road, R.No.2nd street, Jain Temple Road, Connaught Road, Edward Road, Cunnigham Road Cross, Infantry Road, Visveswaraiah Tower, Queens Road, Congress office, Vasanth Nagar, Dabaspet, Kallahally all BDA Quarters, M E G Center, Kensington Road and surrounding areas.

'Greed and corruption, root causes of problems'

Soundarya College of Law, Bengaluru, conducted an interactive session on "Access to Justice" on Wednesday. Former Karnataka Lokayukta, N. Santosh Hegde, addressing the students as the chief guest, said no law prevents a person from going to the court to access justice, according to a release from the college. Delivery of justice gets delayed since courts are burdened with litigation, and also because of multiple appeals for which there are provisions in various laws, he said.

Mr. Hegde pointed put that growing greed and corruption are the root causes of the problems in the society, and the solution would be to develop a sense of contentment.

From Page One

Govt. will soon issue circular renaming 'Salaam Aarati' as 'Aarati Namaskara': Jolle

However, the temple's Executive Officer had clarified that nowhere was the evening 'aarati' named "Salaam Mangalaarathi" in the temple's records.

Historian Talakadu Chikkarange Gowda said the ritual was instituted to mark Tipu Sultan's visit to these temples. "These are markers of syncretic culture of the State. The local narratives often use these as metaphors for the greatness of the temple, that even those from other religions revered them. For a ruler like Tipu Sultan, these were instrumental in demonstrating how he treated other religions also with respect in his territory. These rituals at temples often changed with new rulers, while some remained. Now the question arises as to who will decide if the name is to be changed. Does Dharmika Parishat have the right to do so?" he asked.

Persistent drizzle and chilly weather in city

The downpour is a result of cyclone Mandous in Tamil Nadu; the same weather is likely to continue in the city for next two or three days, according to India Meteorological Department

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Umbrellas were out in Bengaluru on Saturday as the city witnessed continuous drizzle. K. MURALI KUMAR

The chill and the drizzle persisted in the city all through Saturday. This was due to the effect of cyclone Mandous in Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, and Andhra Pradesh, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. The same weather is likely to persist in the city for the next two or three days, said IMD.

In most areas, there was no let-up in the persistent drizzle. However, there were no complaints of any rain-related damage.

It was a common sight to see students, office-goers and others, with umbrellas and rain-protection gear, struggle to reach their destinations. Temperatures hovered around 16 degrees Celsius. It was also very cloudy and misty, making the day so gloomy that by afternoon several street lights were lit up in the city. The weather was also windy.

Many who could afford to stay indoors stayed put, as was evident by the traffic on the city's roads.

The IMD has forecast that the sky would be generally cloudy and there was a likelihood of light to moderate rain; surface winds may be strong at times.

The maximum and minimum temperatures is expected to be around 24 degrees Celsius and 19 degrees Celsius respectively, in the city for the next 48 hours.

An IMD official said Karnataka may expect heavy rainfall primarily in the districts of Chitradurga, Davnagere, Shivamogga and Chikkamagaluru on Sunday. Central districts of Karnataka would see heavy rainfall at isolated places.

Trains to airport to stop at Bettahalasur and Doddajala

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

For the benefit of the general public, the South Western Railway (SWR) has decided to give stoppage at Bettahalasur and Doddajala for the trains operated to Kempegowda International Airport halt station. Sources said that the SWR is likely to deploy its own employees at these two stations to run the counters as there is poor response from private halt agents due to very low revenue.

At present, the SWR is running 12 trains from the city to Devanahalli for the benefit of the air passengers and people working at various units at KIA. However, patronage has still remained very poor.

Divisional Railway Manager (Bengaluru division) Shyam Singh said the punctual running of these services to the airport is accorded the highest priority. "Recently, there were instances of a little delay in the services to KIAD halt station due to ongoing safety-related works between Yelahanka and Devanahalli. Within a short period of 3 weeks, these works are targeted for completion which will improve punctuality to a great extent. The timings of the MEMU and DEMU services to the airport as well as stoppages can also be obtained from National Train Enquiry System (NTES) website," he said.

The official added that the ticket fare is just ₹30 for a trip, which is considerably cheap compared to other modes of transport.

"Trains to KIAD station provide an economical and efficient mode of transport to business commuters and is environment friendly as it supports the Railways' initiative in reducing the carbon footprint. Passengers are requested to make full use of these train services." He added that an increase in frequency as well as the extension of train services to the Airport will be explored based on the patronage of existing train services in the coming days.

With winter and cyclonic weather, cases of viral fever and other respiratory ailments on the rise

Afshan Yasmeen
BENGALURU

Doctors attribute the increasing incidence of flu-like illnesses to the sudden change in weather. FILE PHOTO

With the mercury hovering low and cyclonic weather prevailing, the city is under the grip of flu-like illnesses, including viral influenza and respiratory tract infections. This, even as the onslaught of dengue and other vector-borne diseases continues.

Doctors attribute this to the fluctuating weather over the past few weeks, due to impact of cyclone Mandus. Hospitals have been seeing around a 15% rise in the number of patients, especially children, with lower and upper respiratory tract infections and viral fever. At least eight out of every 10 patients suffer from high grade fever, sore throat, running nose, cough, allergic bronchitis, asthma and middle ear infection. Besides, those with chronic obstructive pulmonary airway disease (COPD) are facing a tough time, say doctors. Those with asthma are the worst hit.

While the Bowring and Lady Curzon Medical College Hospital has been seeing nearly 120 children with high-grade fever, cough and cold daily, the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Chest Diseases (RGICD) is flooded with patients showing symptoms of bronchial spasms and asthmatic attacks apart from COPD.

RGICD Director C. Nagaraja said those on inhalers are increasing the frequency of use as they are not getting relief with the regular use. "During winter, the severity of asthma is high, especially in children. We are seeing a 20% rise in such patients along with those with COPD. Admissions are also increasing," he said.

Chikkanarasa Reddy, professor of paediatrics at Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMCRI), said he is seeing over 120 children a day with flu-like illness, respiratory infections, dengue and other vector-borne diseases. "They report high fever. It takes up to five days for the fever to settle down. Usually, paediatric fever cases are high during this time of the year, but the number has almost doubled this year," he said.

K. Ravi, Professor and Head of Department of Medicine at BMCRI, who also heads the State's COVID-19 Clincial Experts' Committee, said the surge in upper respiratory infections (URI) or flu-like presentations has been observed since the last two weeks.

Silver lining

Sachin Kumar, Senior Consultant, Pulmonology and Critical Care Medicine at Sakra World Hospital, said those with chronic respiratory diseases such as COPD, asthma and other comorbidities should get the flu and pneumococcal shots.

"This is a season of viral infections but the only silver lining is that we are rarely getting any severe pneumonia cases such as COVID pneumonia," he added.

Only one student opts for Kannada engineering course

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

Despite the Union government's push for technical courses to be taught in regional languages, the response has been very poor in the State. During the recently concluded CET-2022 counselling for engineering courses, only one student chose Kannada medium.

Of the 42 seats available for Civil Engineering and 24 seats for Mechanical Engineering in Kannada medium, only one student selected a seat for Civil Engineering. SJC Institute of Technology, Chickballapur and Bheemanna Khandre Institute of Technology (BKIT), Bhalki, have permission to offer engineering courses in Kannada medium from the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) for the academic year 2022-23.

Last year, five engineering colleges, including SJC Institute of Technology and BKIT, offered engineering courses in Kannada medium for the academic year 2021-22. Though four students opted for these courses during CET counselling, they later withdrew admissions from the colleges.

14,999 govt. quota seats vacant

Meanwhile, as many as 14,999 government quota engineering seats have been left vacant after the third round of CET-2022 counselling this year. Of the total 65,292 available government quota seats, 50,293 seats were selected by the students for the academic year of 2022-23.

The highest number of seats are vacant in Mechanical and Civil Engineering streams: 5,614 and 4,933 seats, respectively. 1,063 seats for Electrical and Electronics Engineering, 758 seats for Architecture and 247 seats for Aeronautical Engineering also remain vacant. In professional courses like B.Sc (Agri), B.VSc (Veterinary science) and others, a total of 376 seats have remained vacant. Karnataka Examinations Authority has surrendered all these unfilled seats to the concerned colleges for further process.

However, this is an improvement compared to the previous academic years 2021-22, when 23,100 government quota engineering seats remained unselected, highest over the past five years.

"Due to COVID-19, and various reasons, more than 23,000 government quota engineering seats were not filled last year. Compared to that, this year admissions have improved by over 8,000 seats in the government quota," said Ramya. S, Executive Director, KEA.

Timings
BENGALURU

SUNDAY, DEC. 11	
RISE 06:31	SET 17:54
RISE 20:36	SET 09:04
MONDAY, DEC. 12	
RISE 06:32	SET 17:55
RISE 21:28	SET 09:50
TUESDAY, DEC. 13	
RISE 06:32	SET 17:55
RISE 22:17	SET 10:33

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	28	20
Mysuru	27	17
Bengaluru	20	17

Bengaluru Today
24°C The weather will be pleasant but humid. Spell of light to moderate rain and thundershower is likely to occur.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
26°C A comfortable but humid weather to prevaill. Night will be cool. Spell of light to moderate rain and thundershower to occur.

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THE HINDU
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Congestion, encroachments top concerns

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Congestion, long commute time, and encroachment of roads and footpaths emerged as primary concerns during the Citizen Traffic Management meetings, revived after a brief gap, and held at all 44 traffic police stations in the city on Saturday. These meetings will henceforth be held every second Saturday.

"These interactions are an effort to bring people close to traffic management as they are the biggest stakeholders and their involvement will help to a great extent. Those who chaired the meetings, have noted all the issues , and will get a month to work on them. At the next meeting, they have to submit an action taken report ," said M. A. Saleem, Special Commissioner (Traffic).

Bescom starts implementing Grid-connected Rooftop Solar Scheme

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Bescom has started implementing Grid-connected Rooftop Solar Scheme (phase- II), and has received 1,500 applications seeking installation of such solar panels. The Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has allocated 10 mega-watt capacity to Bescom.

"Under this scheme, MNRE is providing a 40% subsidy for the first 3 kW and a 20% subsidy beyond 3 kW and up to 10 kW. The scheme is being implemented in the States by local Electricity Distribution Companies (DISCOMs). The solar panels and other equipment are to be installed by the empanelled vendors as per the standard and specifications issued by the MNRE. The empanelled vendors should do 5-year maintenance of the rooftop solar plant" states the release.

Mahantesh Bilagi, MD, Bescom said consumers can avail this service by logging in to https://solarrooftop.gov.in or https://bescom.karnataka.gov.in. If consumers take a simplified procedure by submitting an application through https://solarrooftop.gov.in, once they furnish all required documents and get the clearance, the subsidy amount will be directly credited to their bank account through DBT.

They have to pay the remaining project cost to the authorised vendors of MNRE.

Consumers can also avail the service of Bescom by submitting online applications through https://bescom.karnataka.gov.in/. Consumers can approach Bescom's empanelled vendors to install the rooftop solar panels.

If consumers avail the services of Bescom to install rooftop solar panels, Bescom will pay the subsidy amount to the vendors and consumers have to pay the remaining amount to the vendors.

Under this scheme, consumers have to install solar panels based on their sanctioned power load. After installing a net meter they can export the surplus power to the grid.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Our client **MR. KATRAGADDA SREENADH,** S/o. Mr. Kodanda Ramaswami, aged about 60 years, residing at 10/106, Rajendra Nagar, Gudivada, Krishna, Andhra Pradesh-521301, is intended & agreed to purchase the Schedule Property from **MR. D. RAJASEKHAR,** S/o. Late. Thirupataiah, aged about 48 years, residing at Flat No.702, Seventh Floor, B Block, Nitesh Central Park, Vinayakanagar, IAF Post, Yelahanka, Bangalore-560063, as such intended to enter into registered Absolute Sale Deed with respect to Schedule Property.

Any person/s asserting any rights, title, interest or claims in the Schedule Property or any part thereof, in any manner, against the owner or having any objections over the Schedule Property should write to the under signed within **FIFTEEN days** of the issuance of this Public Notice with all documentary proof on which they are basing and asserting their rights with regards to the Schedule Property or any part thereof, after which period our clients shall proceed on the basis that there are no claims of whatsoever nature with regards to the Purchase of the Schedule Property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Residential Property bearing **Site No.16,** BBMP Katha No.9203/108/7/14, 15/1 & 15/2, now comes under the jurisdiction of BBMP Ward No.5 (Jakkur), situated at **Kattigenahalli Village, Jala Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk,** previously Bangalore North Taluk, measuring East to West **80 Feet,** North to South **50 Feet** and totally admeasuring **4000 Square Feet** and bounded on:-

East By : 30 Feet Road; West By : Site Nos.30 and 31; North By : Site No.17; South By : Site No.15.

Murthy. J
M.J. Law Associates, Advocates,
No.2, First Floor, Chickkanna Complex, Kattigenahalli Bus Stop, Bangalore-560064.
Mob No. : 9901900508.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I the under signed bring to the notice of the General Public that my clients **Mr. DESAI GIRISH,** Son of Sri. Jeevan Rao Desai, and Mrs. Amruta Desai, wife of Mr. Desai Girish, presently residing at No. 620 N, Coppell Road, Apt 203 Coppell, Texas, USA - 75019, are intended to purchase the Schedule Property as mentioned hereunder from its owner Sri. Upendra Kumar. H. M., son of Sri. Muniswamy. H. M. If any person/s, company, bank, financial institutions etc., has/having any claim or objection for the proposed purchase or having any right, title, interest, possession over the Schedule Property, shall with documentary evidence lodge their objection/ claims within **Seven (07) days** from the date of this notice with the undersigned, failing which, my client shall proceed with the abovementioned transaction.

SCHEDULE

ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL of Apartment bearing Flat No. 804 on the Eighth Floor in Block - E of the Apartment Complex known as "PLAMA HEIGHTS" constructed on the immovable property bearing **BBMP Khatha No. 1218/6/5/6/2A** in all measuring 1,39,891.73 Square Feet, situated at Survey No. 6/5, 6/7 and 6/2A, Hennur Village, Kasaba Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore District, having a super built up area of 1945 Square Feet, (which is inclusive of the Floors, ceilings, and walls between the apartment and proportionate share in all common areas), together with an exclusive right to use one covered reserved Car Parking in the Stilt Floor, and undivided 0.50 % or 558.4529 Square Feet.

Sd/- HARSHAVARDHANA.GA
Advocate, No. 1/3, Jeevan Building, Kumara Park East, Bangalore-560 001.
Place: Bangalore Date: 06.12.2022

Back to earth: A Navy skydiver shows off his landing skills on R.K. Beach in Visakhapatnam. V. RAJU

Knight in fatigues: A Marine Commando (Marco) slides down from a helicopter while demonstrating a search and rescue operation in Mumbai. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Denizen of the deep: A submarine fires flares off the Visakhapatnam coast. K.R. DEEPAK

Blade runner: A Sea King helicopter flies past the Taj Mahal Hotel in Mumbai. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Three-masted barque: Training sail ship *INS Tarangini* stands off the coast of Visakhapatnam. K.R. DEEPAK

Tea stall owner among four people arrested for attacking bakery staff over business rivalry in Munnekolala

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a swift action, the HAL police on Saturday arrested a tea stall owner and three of his associates for attacking the staff of a bakery and taking away valuables over business rivalry in Munnekolala on Thursday.

The incident, captured on CCTV camera, was shared widely on social media creating a furore, prompting the jurisdictional police to take *suo motu* action, and arrest the accused within a few hours of the incident.

City Police Commissioner, C.H. Pratap Reddy, addressing a press conference on Saturday, announced the arrest of Manjunath, owner of the tea stall and his associates, Karthik, 20, a delivery executive, Karthik N., 23, a hotel manager, and Salman, 20, an aluminium worker in Marathahalli. Manjunath had promised to pay money to attack his business rival to create a fear psychosis so that they would vacate and leave the area, a police officer, said.

As per the plan, the accused came to Brahmalingeshwara Condiments, owned by Naveen Kumar Shetty, and ordered tea and cigarettes. Later, they fought over paying the bill. Shetty claimed the gang robbed his gold chain, a mobile phone, and cash from the bakery.

The incident, captured on CCTV camera, was shared widely on social media creating a furore, prompting the jurisdictional police to take *suo motu* action

The CCTV footage that went viral soon turned into a political issue, as the MLA of Byndoor, from where the bakery owner hails, met the Home Minister and appealed to him to catch the culprits at the earliest. Some bakery owners and pro-Kannada activists also protested in front of the police station demanding immediate action.

Initial investigation revealed that Manjunath incurred losses in business ever since the bakery was opened in the area. The attack is due to business rivalry, a senior police officer, who is a part of the investigations said.

P.C. Rao, president, Bangalore Hotel Association, said that incidents of goons and anti-social elements attacking hotels and bakeries were on the rise. There have been cases of staff of hotels and eateries being assaulted and robbed while they were returning home from work. The government should ensure their safety and take necessary measures to curb such incidents, Mr. Rao, said.

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TAMIL YADAV, 46 yrs, 76' born, l'less widow, attractive & young looking, Software Engr by profession. Seeks similar match. Veg prfd. CNB. Ct: 8939042966.

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HINDU PARVATHARAJAKULAM 28 MBBS Slim Fair seeks MBBS/MS/MD grooms. Caste no bar. Whatsapp: 9487675357

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WANTED GROOM Re_marriage: Keralite parents invite proposals for their daughter Asst. Prof. Dermatologist: 33Yrs,165 cm fair, from Doctors or Professionally Settled boys below 38 years. Ph: 9447144391

RC GIRL 26/170cm Working In MICROSOFT.Parents Keralite Settled In CHENNAI.Own BUISINESS Seeks Chennai Based GROOM From a Good Family Background.9884185583

PARENTS OF Vellala Pillai Girl, Trivandrum, M.Tech., 33/175, Utradam, employed as Major in Indian Army. Invites proposal from Officer rank of Army / Airforce / Navy / Banking. Hindu's any. Ph: 9497003119

EZHAVA GIRL 34, BTech MBA (IIM B) working in IMF Washington DC seeks suitable alliance from parents of professionally qualified boys working in US. 8281571268, 9447710558. Email: ushak7@hotmail.com

HINDU – SC Girl: 36/157, Agri -Scientist - (CG-Pune) from south Kerala, seeks alliance from well educated professionals. Contact: 7972420241, 9447296008

NRI GIRL, Viswabrahmin, 30, 157 cm, fair, good looking (Bharani) born & brought up in Dubai, LLB, LLM from England, preparing for NY BAR Examination, presently working in Dubai as lawyer, brother working as doctor in UK. Proposals invited from boys working in UK/US (born and brought up outside Kerala having UK /US academic qualification). Caste no bar (only Hindu). Contact 00918943432057.

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THE HINDU
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DIVORCEE CSI Christian AD 37 Years / 159 Cms B.Sc Nursing. Working in Military Nursing Service (Major Rank) 10 L/pa (No child). Seeks suitable groom without child. Caste no bar. Contact : 9447 578421 / 9667 667264.

CSI CHRISTIAN Nadar Girl Fair, Good Looking, 03–04–1986 born / 152cm / M.Sc M.Phil, working as Assistant Professor in a Reputed Women's College, Mount Road, Chennai. Both Parents Doctors (Private), Suitable Alliance, Employed / Settled in Chennai / With Clean Habits from Same Community. Contact: 9841182514

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HINDU NADAR Girl 29/162 MBBS.MD, V.Fair StarKarthigai Well Settled in Chennai Need MD.MS Groom 8148887767

PILLAI/MUDALIAR, 33, Good looking, MBBS, MD Final yr, Well Settled family seeks Groom aged 33-36 yrs, Engineer/ Business/ Doctor. 9345855735

DKV 36/165cm Anusham, B.Tech, TCS Chennai, now working in US, 16L PA, Seeks SWE, Bank, Central, State, Govt. Grooms. CNB. Ct: 9566884715.

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WELL–TO–DO INTERCASTE Parents– Father–SC (Industrialist) & Mother–Brahmin (Teacher) seek alliance for their second daughter 30/153/ Punarpoosam, Mithunam working as an Animator in Education field. Boy should be well qualified & well placed in his career with a good family background. Caste No Bar. Ct: 9841033501

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35 B.COM MBA Pillai Anusham Raghu in lagnam Divorcee seeks suitable groom and also with children are acceptable 9094020665

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AD 27/160 Dr,wrking seeks groom blw 31y from well settled edu tamil fmly Dr/ Er/Bank/Govt, psu officer 7010541307

SC ADIDRAVIDA,37YRS/163CMS, Dhanus/ pooradam,B.E/MBA,Bank Manager PSU, seeks unmarried employed groom. Email:wedlocknew@gmail.com

HINDU MUTHURAJA 29/164cm, B.E, IT. Seeks employed Engineering Groom. Other BC communities accepted. Contact : 98433 42955

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INTER CASTE Parents seek for daughter 27/156 SWE employed Chennai, from suitable Hindu groom. 90032 87101

SAIVA PILLAI 27/165 BE Civil Wheatish Maharam seeks employed groom. Contact: 6380810427

HINDU ADIDRAVIDA 32/155/MBA 50K Tula–Swathi seeks qualified Groom from well Settled Family. Ct:9444711533

GIRL 35 yrs,Fair, Mithunam, B.Com, MBA,Grammani ,working, Seeks suitable groom. Contact: 9445287838

BRIDE HOLDING Group–B post in Indian Foreign Service seeks alliance. 25yr, 5ft 5inch, BSc(Maths), beautiful, slim, Iyer, Athreya. Tamil Brahmin groom only. robot3391@gmail.com

INTERCASTE HINDU parents, girl B.Tech. BL., aged 32, fair 173cm. Star Chithirai. Seeks well educated, employed groom, any caste in Hindu family. Contact 82480 53864

HINDU MUTHURAJA, 28 / 155 / BE / Software Engineer in UK.Seeks groom in UK or willing to go to UK. Caste No Bar. 99444 00307, 89034 21862

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KARKATHA PILLAI, 25/162, BDS, good looking Girl seeks Groom with MDS /MD/MS qualification from Pillai or Mudaliar community. Sub caste no bar. Please contact: 76959 54933.

MBBS, MD, Govt.Service 30, Aayilyam, Pillai, 129 cm subsects no-bar. Qualified suitable Groom Contact 9003204007

HINDU DKV Pallan 43 BE MBA Govt. Seeks Govt / Private employed Groom. Cell : 94425 87090

HINDU SC Adi dravida, BE MBA, Female age 29, working in Accenture, Contact 9444991091.

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TAMIL

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TAMIL

AGAMUDAYA MUDALIYAR, Divorced, 40 Mirugasiridam PhD TN Govt. Job Rs 1.10 p/m 7904550883

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42 YRS /167 cm, handsome, Manager MNC, MBA, tamil/kannada brahmin, own apartment in Chennai. Seeks bride from a decent, educated family. Contact No: 73387 39784

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TAMIL

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TELUGU

NAIDU, 27/180CM, BTech, MS, Pooratathi , Working as Research Engineer in Sweden. Contact 9566682220

TELUGU VANNAR, 1984, MBA, Kanni, Astham, Manager in MNC, 20 Lac.PA, Caste No Bar. Contact : 82480 12326

TELUGU

HINDU, 33 Fair/Tall/ Handsome boy MBA, Seeks Suitable Eudcated Girl (Veg.) from decent Family. 9444390833

BALIJA NAIDU V.Fair Boy/ 12-2-86 / BE MS /USA/182 CM/ UTH.BHADRA/ Well Setld Fmly. Seeks Sutble B. Naidu Bride. No demands. Contact. 94423 39080/94410 80676

NAIDU PUNARPOOSAM 35 MBA Own Flat, seeks bride, good family background. Ct: 9445367047 / 9445367057

✔ **BALIJA, HANDSOME** 97 born very rich affluent business family seeks very fair and beautiful bride from high status and networth. Ct 7305010105

KAMMAVAR NAIDU 29, 174 cm Pooram–Simmam M.S (Engg) working in Irvine, CA, USA seeks bride from same community working/studying in USA, CT.9442026567

DEVANGA 38/170, B.Arch Thiruvadhirai, Self Employment Seeking Bride Degree with Job. CNB. Never Married, No Issues for widower & Divorcee without any Pbm. Ct: 9962135928

REPUTED NAIDU affluent Business Family in Chennai seeks Bride from USA, for their Son B.E., M.S. USA, 32 yrs,Vice President of a Global Bank in USA, Doctors from India also preferred. Ct: 9840050920

RICH KAMMANAIDU, 28/ B.Tech, Own 3 Spinning Mills, Wind Mills, (Only Son) Seeks Bride. Ct: 72002–61495

BRIDE WANTED
A affluent Telugu Naidu family Settled in chennai, Seeks alliance for their only Son - DOB : 02/08/1999, Meenam,Uthiratathi, 5.9', Very fair B.com, MBA, Father is a good Networth individual. Seeks Alliance from the Same Caste.
Ct: 98410 71701
sanjaychemicals2006@yahoo.com

BRIDE WANTED
IAS Officer, Male, Age 37, Divorcee with no liability. Looking for suitable match. Caste / Religion - No bar. Contact Numbers 9666613436, 9490116390, 9811590310

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MUDALIYAR, 27, 178 cms, Businessman, B.Tech. Lives in Chennai. Belongs to an affluent business family with a good net worth. Looking for a suitable match in Chennai. Contact: 6366448343

MUDALIYAR, 27, 175 cms, Businessman, BE. Lives in Pondicherry. Belongs to an affluent business family with a good net worth. Looking for a like minded match. Contact: 6366448344

PILLAI, 26, 173 cms, Medical Professional, MBBS. Lives in Singapore. Father is a working professional. Family is affluent. Looking for an amiable match. Contact: 6366448344

VANNIA KULA KSHATRIYAR, 36, 170 cms, Mariner, BE. Lives in Chennai. Father is a working professional. Family is financially well off with a good net worth. Looking for an affable match. Contact: 6366448344

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NAIR 33 MCA Divorce Poorarutathi Team Lead in Accenture Drawing Rs.18L/PA Seeks Suitable Bride 9840534600

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INBRIEF

WDC to help State to promote design thinking in schools

Paula Gazard, Chair of the World Design Council, extended help to the government of Karnataka to promote design thinking in schools and colleges across Karnataka. She handed over the support letter to Minister for Higher Education C.N. Ashwath Narayan on the final day of the Future Design Summit of the Bengaluru Design Festival. According to a release, this was in response to the Minister's announcement during the inaugural season of the festival that the government is planning to promote "design thinking" in schools and colleges. "The WDC will extend the global design thinking curriculum and help schools and colleges set up design clubs in their institutions," said Ms. Gazard.

Karnataka must reach the top in skill development: Bommai

The Centre has provided facilities for training 44% of youth to make them skilled and eligible for all kinds of jobs, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has said. Karnataka must be at the top in skill development and human resources, he said after inaugurating RUDSETI National Academy in Bengaluru on Saturday. The youth must take benefit from the best training centre like RUDSETI, become entrepreneurs and provide job to others, he added. D. Veerendra Heggade, Rajya Sabha member, Minister S.T. Somashekar, and Rural Development Ministry Secretary Shailendra Kumar Singh were present.

India's first CoE for 3D bioprinting inaugurated

The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and CELLINK, a bioconvergence company, have inaugurated the country's first 3D bioprinting Center of Excellence (CoE), which will focus on providing researchers tools to advance discoveries in tissue engineering, regenerative medicine, and drug discovery.

Housed in the Centre for BioSystems Science and Engineering at IISc's Bengaluru campus, the CoE will provide access to 3D bioprinting systems, enabling researchers to accelerate their work across critical applications with the ultimate goal of improving health outcomes.

The CoE was inagurated by Minister for Higher Education and Science C.N. Ashwath Narayan.

Congress poll strategy: Siddaramaiah, DKS to head out on bus yatras

The former Chief Minister will begin his tour from Basavakalyan in Bidar district on January 3 while the party's State unit president will start from the southern part of the State

Nagesh Prabhu
BENGALURU

As the Assembly elections near, Karnataka Congress is set to flag off two bus yatras – one led by the former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and another by KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar – in two directions.

While Mr. Siddaramaiah will start his yatra from Basavakalyan in Bidar district in north Karnataka on January 3, Mr. Shivakumar has decided to take out the yatra from the southern part of the State. The latter's bus is getting ready and he is yet to fix the date and venue for the launch of the yatra, sources in the party said.

The bus that has been readied for the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly Siddaramaiah.

Internal tussle

Mr. Shivakumar, who initially opposed the bus yatra of Mr. Siddaramaiah, is learnt to have later buried differences on the matter. Instead, Mr. Shivakumar has decided to take out his own yatra, in another indication of the continued tussle within the Karnataka Congress over who is the party's chief ministerial candidate for the 2023 Legislative Assembly elections. Both leaders took part in the padayatra launched in December-January last for putting pressure on the State government on the execution of the proposed Mekedatu project across the Cauvery in Kanakapura. They also together took part in party leader Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra. Sources said Mr. Siddaramaiah, who was elected from Badami constituency in 2018, wanted to consolidate the party's vote bank among the OBCs, Lingayats, and minorities in north Karnataka. During the yatra, the party is also expected to focus on bringing back leaders who defected to other parties in the region.

Yatras galore

While the BJP has planned yatras to cover all the 224 constituencies, the Opposition Janata Dal (Secular) has launched a Pancharatna Yatre led by the former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, virtually making it a season of yatras in Karnataka.

The former Chief Minister S.M. Krishna, who now is in the BJP, had taken out bus yatras during 1999 and 2004 Assembly elections.

KPCC chief tussles with multiple ticket aspirants

Nagesh Prabhu
BENGALURU

In many constituencies, an average of five or six candidates have submitted applications for ticket, say sources

KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar has been making all-out efforts to contain dissidence at the Assembly constituency level as too many aspirants are seeking the party ticket to contest the next year's elections.

Sources in the Congress said 26 aspirants have been seeking the ticket in Bijapur City constituency and arriving at a consensus on the choice of a candidate is an enormous task for the party. BJP's Basavanagouda Patil Yatnal is representing the constituency now.

Similarly, 22 candidates submitted applications in Shivamogga City, 18 in Mandya, 16 in Devanahalli, 20 in Tumakuru City, 18 in Harapanahalli, and 15 in Ballari City constituencies.

In other constituencies, sources said on an average five or six candidates have submitted applications. In total, the KPCC has received 1,350 applications for ticket from those keen to contest the Assembly elections. Mr. Shivakumar has already held a couple of meetings to cut down the list of aspirants in some of the constituencies. As some candidates lobby for the ticket on the basis of party loyalty and the leader, differences between Mr. Shivakumar and Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly Siddaramaiah are bound to surface during distribution of ticket, sources maintained.

Both leaders, sources said, agreed to announce the first list of 150 candidates in January to provide adequate time for mobilising logistics for the campaign. Fielding candidates who joined the party from other parties is expected to trigger discontent in the rank and file.

Work collectively; high command will choose CM: Kharge

The Hindu Bureau
KALABURAGI

Amid the power struggle between Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president D.K. Shivakumar and Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly Siddaramaiah on who is the party's chief ministerial face, All India Congress Committee president M. Mallikarjun Kharge has asked the party leaders to unitedly work to bring the party to power in the State and leave the task of picking the Chief Minister to the high command.

AICC president M. Mallikarjun Kharge with the former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in Kalaburagi on Saturday. ARUN KULKARNI

"What I want to clearly and loudly say is that I want the Congress to come to power. Don't keep speculating on who will be the next Chief Minister if the Congress assumes power. The high command will decide on it. What you need to do is to unite and work hard to ensure the party's victory in the State," he said, in the presence of Mr. Shivakumar, Mr. Siddaramaiah, and other party leaders, at a massive public meeting at Kalaburagi on Saturday.

The event was organised to offer a grand welcome to Mr. Kharge who came to his home town for the first time after assuming the top post.

"Just as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah extensively tour the poll-bound States addressing rallies at even small towns and villages, you, the Congress leaders, too should similarly reach out the people," he said.

On his election to the top post in the party, Mr. Kharge said he never aspired for the post but the post itself came to his doorstep. "I never wanted or asked for the post. Yet, I got it. I similarly got many posts in the past also," he said.

Training his guns at the Union government and Mr. Modi, the veteran Congress leader pointed out how the BJP failed to fulfil its promise of creating new jobs for the youth of the country.

"Forget about creating two crore jobs every year [one of the BJP's poll promises]. You [the Union government] are not, at least, filling the 30 lakh posts lying vacant in Central government departments, armed forces, banks, and semi-government and aided institutions. Only speeches cannot fill people's bellies. They need jobs," he said.

Cabinet expansion: BJP likely to induct faces from communities it wants to woo ahead of polls

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

There is again buzz in the Bharatiya Janata Party that the State Cabinet will be expanded, as the party prepares for the upcoming Assembly polls.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai recently met Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) leaders, where strategies for the State polls were reportedly discussed. Mr. Bommai reportedly also sought their support to expand his Cabinet and induct those who have become disgruntled after they lost berths and a few fresh faces to put a united front during the elections.

He is scheduled to visit New Delhi to meet Union Minister Amit Shah to discuss the Belagavi border dispute this week, when he will likely bring up the Cabinet expansion issue too, sources in the party said.

Presently, there are six vacant berths in the Cabinet, all of which the Chief Minister is keen to fill. Sources said the Chief Minister and the party were also keen to drop a few Ministers and accommodate new faces, from electorally key communities that the party wants to woo in the upcoming polls.

"There are several smaller communities that have not got adequate representation in the corridors of power for a long time. Making Ministers from these communities ahead of the elections will help the party. No community is small and no vote is a waste, is the principle to work on," said a senior party office-bearer. P. Rajeev from the Lambani community, K. Poornima from the Golla community, and Baburao Chinchansur from the Koli community are among those in the race, multiple sources in the party said.

K.S. Eshwarappa and Ramesh Jarkiholi have been demanding their re-induction into the Cabinet.

Apart from these, K.S. Eshwarappa from the Kuruba community and Ramesh Jarkiholi from the Valmiki community, former Ministers who had to resign over allegations of corruption and a sex scandal, respectively, have got clean chits from the police since and have been demanding their re-induction. "Both hail from electorally key communities, and since they have got a clean chit, they may be inducted," said a senior Minister.

Another former Minister C.P. Yogeshwar, a Vokkaliga and from the crucial Channapatna taluk in Ramanagaram district, from where JD(S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy will likely contest again in 2023, is also one of the persons being considered, sources said.

"Both KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar and Mr. Kumaraswamy are from Ramanagaram district and our party does not have any prominent local leader from the district to take them on," the senior Minister said. Mr. Yogeshwar lost to Mr. Kumaraswamy in this seat in 2018.

The party is also mulling over inducting prominent Dalit face N. Mahesh from Kollegal, Chamarajanagar district, who joined the BJP from the Bahujan Samaj Party into the Cabinet, sources said. Other aspirants who are lobbying hard include G.H. Thipparedy, Dattatreya Patil Revur, and Arvind Bellad.

Shiradi Ghat road: CM to hold meet

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said here on Saturday that he would call a meeting of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) officials in a week to address the bad and non-motorable condition of a stretch of the Shiradi Ghat on the Mangaluru-Bengaluru national highway 75.

The Chief Minister told presspersons at Mangaluru International Airport on his way to Kalladka that the meeting was aimed at providing a permanent solution to the problems being faced by commuters.

Border row: 'Meeting of CMs with Shah likely on December 14 or 15'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A meeting on the Karnataka-Maharashtra border row, under the chairmanship of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and to be attended by Chief Ministers of both the States, will be held on December 14 or 15.

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai announced this on Saturday.

Over the past fortnight, the border row has seen escalation and there have been some violent incidents in Belagavi and border regions of Maharashtra.

Mr. Bommai told reporters at the Vidhana Soudha here on Saturday that some MPs from Karnataka would be meeting Mr. Shah on Monday. He had also spoken to Mr. Shah.

"The stand and the ground reality has been explained to him and it will be once again clarified when I meet him personally," said the Chief Minister.

On the proposed all-party meeting, Mr. Bommai said it would be held to discuss the issue. He said he had spoken informally with former Chief Ministers H.D. Kumaraswamy and Siddaramaiah.

The meeting date would be fixed in consultation with them, he added.

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INDUSTRIAL NEEDS

INBRIEF

Two gold medallists seek sponsorship

Two students of Dr. Lankapalli Bullayya College here secured gold medals in the deadlift segment of the recently concluded Commonwealth Powerlifting Championship in New Zealand. B. Anil Kumar, a first-year MBA student, won the 83-kg category and M. Durga Prasad, a final-year BA student, won the 93-kg category, according to college secretary and correspondent G. Madhu Kumar. Coming from a poor family, Anil and Prasad told *The Hindu* that any financial contribution in the form of sponsorship would help them achieve more goals.

Japanese encephalitis confirmed in boy from U.P.

Japanese encephalitis virus infection has been confirmed in a 10-year-old boy from Uttar Pradesh staying at Pakkayil, near Vadakara, in Kerala's Kozhikode district. This virus infection is spread by the bite of mosquitoes. According to sources, the boy was admitted to the Institute of Maternal and Child Health attached to the Government Medical College Hospital, Kozhikode, with fever, headache, and other symptoms on December 5. A team from the medical college and staff from the district vector control unit visited Pakkayil area on Saturday. The officials suspect that the origin could be migratory birds or mosquitoes.

TTD to release special darshan tickets for December 16, 31

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) will be releasing the ₹300 Special Entry Darshan (SED) tickets for December 16 and 31, at 9 a.m. on December 13. The tickets can be availed on the TTD's official website.

Cyclone Mandous triggers gales, heavy showers in A.P.

State government deploys officials at all irrigation tanks vulnerable to breaches in Chittoor district; electric poles and many trees have been uprooted; heavy rain to continue in the district today

The Hindu Bureau
CHITTOOR

Cyclone Mandous brought heavy gales and downpour in several parts of the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh, uprooting electrical poles and trees during the last 24 hours ending Saturday evening. With the prediction of heavy rain till Sunday afternoon, the district administration has been on alert, deploying personnel at all irrigation tanks, which are receiving considerable inflows.

The district received a cumulative rainfall of 2,000.6 mm from 8 a.m. on Friday till 2 p.m. on Saturday, with a concentration in Nagari, Vijayapuram, S.R. Puram, Nindra, and Karveti Nagaram mandals.

Full flow: The Pullamgeru rivulet in spate between Pullampeta and Seetarampeta villages in Annamayya district on Saturday.

Rehabilitation centres were set up in these mandals accommodating 328 people from the low-lying colonies. A culvert at Deenabandupuram of Palamasamudram mandal was damaged due to rains, and officials took steps to repair it.

Collector M. Hari Narayanan, along with a team of officials, conducted inspections in the residential areas in the low-lying areas along the Neeva river in the municipal corporation limits.

The officials of the SPDCL told him that 58 electrical poles were uprooted in the district.

The Koundinya, Bahuda, and Gargeya rivers in the district were in spate. The officials said that a special guard was mounted at the Krishnapuram reservoir near Karveti Nagaram. While its FRL level is 213 metres, the present level reached 210.5 metres following heavy inflows since Friday evening.

The mandals of Railway Kodur, Obulavaripalle, and Rajampeta in Annamayya district bore the brunt of cyclone Mandous.

While the Rajampeta division witnessed a rainfall of 347 mm during the last 24 hours, it was 103.2 mm in Rayachoti division, followed by 96.4 mm in the Madanapalle division.

DMK MP raises concern over obscene content on social media

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Rajya Sabha member Kanimozhi N.V.N. Somu, representing the DMK, has raised concern over the prevalence of obscene and vulgar content on social media through a question in the Rajya Sabha.

In her question, which was answered on Friday, the MP wanted to know the measures taken by the Union government to curb the obscenity and vulgarity, and whether current legislation were enough to achieve the same.

Various measures

Rajeev Chandrasekhar, the Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology, in his reply, listed various measures taken by the government.

He highlighted that the policies of the government were aimed at ensuring an open, safe, trusted and accountable internet for users.

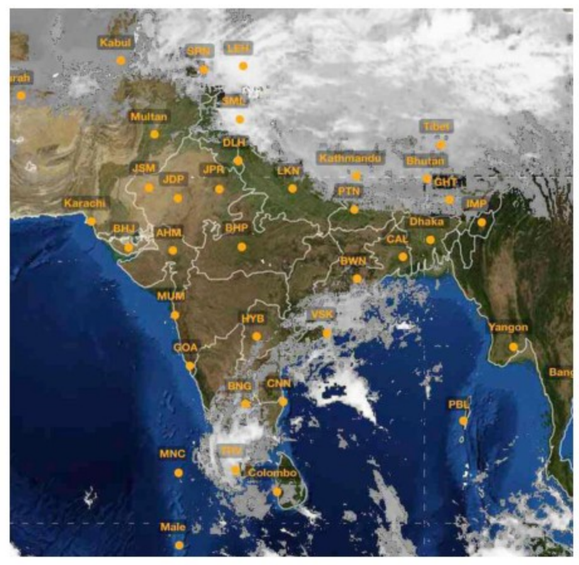
"With the expansion of the internet and more Indians coming online, the potential for Indians being exposed to obscene and vulgar content has grown," he said.

He pointed to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules to make the intermediaries accountable in many ways.

He also listed the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal, financial assistance to States for capacity building, creating awareness and issuing guidelines as some of the measures being taken.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over north Tamil Nadu, south interior Karnataka, Kerala and Mahe. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Vidharbha, central Maharashtra, Marathwada and Konkan & Goa. Dense fog likely in isolated pockets over Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	29.0	14.0	Kozhikode	0.2	30.7	23.8
Ahmedabad	—	30.1	14.7	Kurnool	4	24.5	18.2
Aizawl	—	—	12.5	Lucknow	—	26.8	12.3
Allahabad	—	27.2	10.6	Madurai	0.5	33.7	21.8
Bengaluru	4.3	19.6	16.8	Mangaluru	—	30.9	22.3
Bhopal	—	26.0	10.2	Mumbai	—	33.8	16.5
Bhubaneswar	—	26.0	19.7	Mysuru	4	30.0	16.6
Chandigarh	—	27.1	10.3	New Delhi	—	27.6	8.3
Chennai	116	24.3	21.8	Patna	—	26.1	10.8
Coimbatore	3	28.0	19.4	Port Blair	0.5	31.0	24.2
Dehradun	—	27.0	9.4	Puducherry	30.3	25.6	19.0
Gangtok	—	16.3	9.1	Pune	—	30.2	12.7
Goa	—	32.6	19.0	Raipur	—	27.0	16.8
Guwahati	—	28.4	13.3	Ranchi	—	24.0	13.0
Hubballi	—	25.0	19.0	Shillong	—	18.8	8.1
Hyderabad	—	26.7	19.0	Shimla	—	16.8	8.1
Imphal	—	24.3	10.1	Srinagar	0.9	11.2	2.8
Jaipur	—	26.8	11.4	Thiruvananthapuram	—	32.4	23.2
Kochi	1	30.0	22.2	Tiruchi	—	28.5	22.4
Kohima	—	20.5	8.2	Vijayawada	13	27.2	20.5
Kolkata	—	27.2	18.4	Visakhapatnam	20	27.0	18.5

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.30	140	.64	...102	.....—	
Bengaluru	...7	..16	.57	70	89	
Chennai	.26	..23	.43	37	34	
Delhi	.19	137	114	...403	...420	
Hyderabad	.58	..41	.23	...140	...133	
Kolkata	.11	..25	.34	...302	...236	
Lucknow	.11	..86	.74	...325	...251	
Mumbai	.77	145	..—	...295	...184	
Pune	..—	..53	.66	.....—	.....—	.....—
Visakhapatnam	.31	..44	.44	...139	...104	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Gadag, Karnataka recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 500 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 16

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Season of stars

Jolly time: A child looking at the stars and other decorative items displayed at a shop ahead of Christmas in Kerala's Kottayam district on Saturday. VISHNU PRATHAP

Indigenous community of Sabarimala forests keeps pilgrimage trail litter-free

Hiran Unnikrishnan
PATHANAMTHITTA

The pilgrimage season at Sabarimala also marks a crunch time for the forests around the hillock. Pilgrims keep moving along the roads here without a break, the impact of which can be devastating.

But thanks to a community initiative by the Forest Department, an indigenous community collective is helping the authorities keep the forest roads here clean. The collective, called eco-guards, comprises 25 members including women from the Malampandaram tribe, a nomadic community living inside the Sabarimala forests.

Deployed between Laha and Chalakkayam along the main trunk road to Sabarimala, they keep walking constantly along the route throughout the day and collect plastic waste dropped on the road. The eco-guards also assist the elephant squads of the Forest Department to prevent the wild elephants from entering the road here and block traffic.

Green measures: Eco-guards collecting plastic littered on the trunk road to Sabarimala. A scene from Laha. LEJU KAMAL

Jayakumar Sharma, Divisional Forest Officer, Ranni, said the plastic garbage collected by the eco-guards were handed over to the Kudumbasree-run shredding unit at Thiruvalla through the Plappally, Kanamala, and Rajampara forest stations.

"It makes sense to remove plastics from the forests before they have had a chance to do any harm to the wildlife. Plastics, especially in patches, have travelled a long way and potentially done a lot of harm to the elephant population here," said the official.

The duty also serves as a source of daily income for the Malampandarams, who otherwise eke out a living through the collection of forest resources. The wage per head is fixed at ₹600 per day and the Forest Department has approached the District Collector of Pathanamthitta to release ₹25 lakh for disbursing their salaries.

HC imposes cost of ₹5 lakh on BDA for making frivolous attempts to keep dispute alive

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka has imposed a cost of ₹5 lakh on the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) for making frivolous attempts to keep a dispute alive even after court orders have gone against it.

Justice V. Srishananda passed the order while dismissing an appeal filed by the BDA questioning the order passed in 2011 by a civil court, which had restrained the BDA from interfering in the peaceful possession of about two acres of land, situated at Alahalli in Uttarahalli hobli of Bengaluru South taluk, belonging to Venkatarama Reddy and his sister Vinutha M. Reddy.

FROM THE COURT

Karnataka HC passed the order while dismissing an appeal by BDA questioning a civil court order that restrained the authority from interfering in peaceful possession of land in Bengaluru South

Land acquisition

The BDA had issued a notification for acquiring their lands in early 1990s along with other lands. However, on a petition filed by them in 1996, the BDA had agreed before the High Court to leave their land from acquisition based on a government's scheme that allowed private persons to form private layouts and relinquish specified portion of the developed land in the layouts to the BDA.

Though the BDA had permitted them to get their lands converted for the formation of layout, it did not act on their application for development of their land.

Later, the BDA, contrary to its 1996 undertaking before the High Court by way of a joint memo, had passed an award for acquiring their land and deposited the award sum in the civil court, which however, rejected the award as it was contrary to the undertaking given to the High Court.

Despite losing multiple litigations over their land, the BDA had filed the present appeal and tried to defend its action of acquiring land.

Court finding

The court found that besides acting contrary to the undertaking given to the court, the BDA had also taken "a false contention that acquisition proceedings is complete."

Condemning the manner and conduct of the BDA in filling "unrealistic and frivolous" appeal, the court said that it is necessary to impose exemplary costs to would deter such unrighteous litigations.

Three persons who opened fire at rowdy-turned-realtor arrested

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Whitefield Division Police arrested three shooters from Prakasham district of Andhra Pradesh, who along with their associate, opened fire at a rowdy-turned-realtor, and his car driver in a bid to kill them in Seegehalli in K.R. Puram on Thursday.

Fear gripped the residents of Happy Garden in Seegehalli when the assailants confronted Shivashankar Reddy and his associate Ashok Reddy, and opened fire indiscriminately, and escaped in two motorcycles.

> The special team of police tracked their movements and arrested three of the attackers from Mundaluru town.
>
> **S. GIRISH**
> DCP, Whitefield

Shivashankar Reddy had come to inspect the apartment he was constructing and was talking to a neighbour when the incident occured. The injured Shivashankar and Ashok were rushed to hospital and survived.

Initial probe revealed that Shivashankar Reddy is a rowdy having as many as nine criminal cases pending against him. His family from Tambalapalli in Chittoor district, Andhra Pradesh, had an arch rivalry with their neighbour Byyareddy and eventually killed him in 2011. In retaliation Byyareddy's family killed Shivashankar's father Jayachandra Reddy and attacked Shivashankar Reddy before he could retaliate.

They stalked Shivashankar Reddy armed with country-made weapons and carried out the attack before fleeing. However, the special team of police tracked their movements and arrested three of the attackers from Mundaluru town in Prakasham district while efforts are on to track down others, S. Girish, DCP, Whitefield said.

What mattered in a tight race in Himachal?

Anti-incumbency aside, voting for a candidate over party, stark difference in voting choices of the affluent and the poor, and the middle-age voters could have tilted balance

Sandeep Shastri
Suhas Palshikar
Sanjay Kumar

Victory lap: Congress workers celebrate in Dehradun after the Assembly election results were announced on December 8. PTI

It happens rarely in the electoral contests in a State that a difference of less than one percentage of votes between the two key contestants contributed to one party scampering off to victory and the other left trailing behind. Himachal Pradesh provided one such example.

The Congress was ahead of the BJP by a wafer-thin vote share advantage and was able to win a majority of the seats in the Assembly.

In such close contests, even the smallest of vote swings can lead to dramatically different results. The Lokniti-CSDS post-poll in Himachal Pradesh provides some indicators on what could have contributed to the Congress's victory in this hill State.

One could always fall back on the argument that since its formation, the State of Himachal Pradesh (save once) has never voted back a ruling party. The 'revolving door' policy continues! Yet, the BJP made an all-out effort to reverse that trend. It was the home State of the BJP's national president, and the Prime Minister too campaigned and made a strong emotional appeal. The top leaders of the BJP were roped in to boost the campaign.

The Congress, on the other hand, launched a low-key campaign focusing on a string of local issues. It was also helped by the fact that the AAP did not seriously eat into its votes.

In the series of articles, based on our post-poll survey in Himachal Pradesh, a range of factors have been identified. This piece looks at the big picture in the State.

It is clear that both the Congress and the BJP were able to get their committed voters out to vote. In both cases, close to two-thirds of those who voted for them said they took that decision well before the campaign began.

The Congress has a one percentage point advantage in this regard. The campaign, too, did not have an impact and only one-fourth of the BJP voters said they decided on whom to vote for at the last minute.

In the case of the Congress, it was slightly less than one-fourth of its voters who made the choice at the last minute.

The two parties had a similar percentage of voters who decided on whom to vote for during the campaign. These marginal differences in the approach of committed voters and last-minute deciders could have tilted the balance (Table 1).

Party or candidate?

Another important point of difference between the Congress and BJP supporters is on whether the party or candidate propelled their vote choice.

In the case of the BJP, more than half said it was the party and only four in 10 mentioned the candidates. On the other hand, in the case of the Congress, both factors seem to have played an equal role in determining the vote choice (Table 2). Thus in the case of the Congress, the candidate also mattered, and this could have been the impact of local factors in swinging the vote.

It is vital to underscore the fact that among the poor the gap between the Congress and the BJP is a massive 13 percentage points.

It is important to record that nine of 10 respondents stated that the work done by the candidates was crucial in deciding whom they would vote for (Table 3).

Poor voted for Congress

There is also the clear impact of the economic factor that is elaborated in greater detail in the other articles in this series. The Congress vote share among the poor was much higher than that of the BJP and decreased as one moved to the more affluent sections of society. On the other hand, the reverse was true of the BJP, whose vote share declined as one moved from the affluent to the poor.

It is vital to underscore the fact that among the poor the gap between the Congress and the BJP is a massive 13 percentage points.

When it comes to the affluent sections, the BJP led over the Congress by a mere four percentage points and in the middle-class the support for the two parties was uniform. For the BJP, however, there was a 10 percentage point drop in votes from among the poor, when compared with the 2017 election. This could have been the critical factor (Table 4).

Especially when issues of healthcare and roads were cited by voters as matters of concern, the performance of the BJP among the economically disadvantaged could be a key factor in explaining their losing the election.

Further, the Congress appears to have done much better than the BJP when it comes to the middle-age voters. The two parties equally split the younger voters and the BJP appears to have done better among the older respondents.

This crucial tilt of the middle-age voter who again could have focussed on concerns relating to price rise and unemployment may have been a crucial factor.

If one were to notice the BJP's performance across regions, there is a uniform decline in vote share (as compared with 2017) across all regions. The decline is sharp in four crucial areas – Hamirpur, Solan, Kullu and Kinnaur. The capacity to bring in its committed voters, its focus on local issues and taking advantage of the economic discontent could well have swung the verdict in favour of the Congress.

(Sandeep Shastri is Vice-Chancellor at Jagran Lakecity University, Bhopal & the national coordinator of the Lokniti network; Suhas Palshikar teaches political science and is chief editor of Studies in Indian Politics; and Sanjay Kumar is professor and co-director, Lokniti-CSDS)

Table 1: Two-thirds of the Congress and BJP voters took voting decision well before the campaign began

	Last minute	During the campaign	After announcement of candidates	Before the campaign started
Overall	10	12	15	61
Among Congress voters	10	11	12	64
Among BJP voters	9	10	15	63
Among other parties	10	22	22	44

Note: All figures are in percentages. Rest did not respond

Question asked: When did you finally make up your mind about whom to vote for?

Table 2: Party or candidate?

	Party	Candidate	Leader	Something else	Did not answer
Overall	45	46	1	2	6
Congress	46	45	1	2	7
BJP	52	39	1	3	4
Others	16	72	3	3	6

Note: All figures are in percentages

Question asked: While deciding whom to vote for in this Assembly election, what did you give more consideration/importance to — party or candidate?

Table 3: Preferred attributes of the candidates

	How important is it for voters to have these attributes in candidate while casting their vote			
	A lot	Little bit	Very less	Not at all
Work done	90	7	1	1
Education	89	7	2	1
Young candidate	54	28	7	8
Candidate's party	49	19	9	19
Local candidate	41	16	6	31
Female candidate	23	24	16	30
Religion	9	9	11	65
Candidate's caste	5	6	10	72

Table 4: Congress vote share among the poor was much higher than that of the BJP

	Congress		BJP		Others	
	2022	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017
Poor	51	40	38	48	12	12
Lower	43	41	44	51	13	8
Middle	43	41	43	51	14	8
Rich	40	45	46	43	14	12

The methodology

The findings presented here are from the Himachal Pradesh Assembly post-poll study 2022 conducted by the Lokniti programme of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi. The survey was conducted between November 15 and November 24. A total of 2,844 voters spread across 110 polling stations in randomly selected 28 Assembly constituencies were interviewed for the survey. The field work was coordinated by Professor Ramesh Chauhan and Dr. Jagmeet Bawa in Himachal Pradesh and supervised by Dr. Joginder Singh Saklani and Dr. Jyoti.

The sampling design adopted was multi-stage systematic random sampling (SRS). The Assembly constituencies were randomly selected using the probability proportional to size method.

Thereafter, four polling stations within each of the sampled Assembly constituencies were selected using the SRS method. In each polling station, 40 voters were randomly sampled from the electoral roll using the SRS method. The interviews were conducted face-to-face at electors' homes by specially-trained field investigators, mostly students from various colleges and universities of Himachal Pradesh. A Hindi questionnaire was used for the survey.

Though the sample is relatively small, the total number of voters interviewed represent the social reality of the voters of Himachal Pradesh, i.e. the sample is truly representative of the voters of Himachal Pradesh with regard to social composition. In order to make corrections for under-representation of any social groups, weights have been applied.

Reading voters' mind

Important consideration while voting in Himachal Pradesh election

	2022	2017
Development	45	19
Inflation/Rising prices of essential commodities	12	4
Unemployment	9	6
Functioning of government	5	Less than 1%
Change/Removal of government	5	Less than 1%
Bringing back the government	3	Less than 1%
Vote for a particular leader/ party/candidate	2	Less than 1%

Note: All figures in percentages

Question asked: What was the most important issue for you while voting in this Assembly election?

Nine out of 10 voters are concerned with inflation and unemployment

	Price Rise		Unemployment	
	2022	2017	2022	2017
Increased	94	72	88	31
Decreased	1	15	2	30
Same as before	4	11	8	31
No response	1	2	2	8

Note: All figures in percentages

Question asked: Have these issues increased or decreased in your area in the past five years? — inflation and unemployment

Voters who believed that inflation and joblessness rose preferred the Congress

Inflation	Congress	BJP	Others
Inflation has increased	45	41	13
Unemployment has increased	46	41	14

Note: All figures in percentages

Opinion on Central govt.'s decision to give ST status to Hatti community

	Overall	Voted Congress	Voted BJP	Voted Others
Fully support	20	35	54	11
Somewhat support	12	48	39	12
Somewhat oppose	4	40	45	15
Fully oppose	15	57	32	12
No response	48	43	42	14

Note: All figures in percentages

Question asked: Do you support or oppose the Centre's decision to give the Hatti community ST status?

How voters of different castes voted?

Caste	Congress		BJP		Others	
	2022	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017
Brahmin	33	35	48	56	19	9
Rajput	40	36	49	49	11	15
Other upper castes	34	44	54	51	11	5
OBC	58	43	36	48	6	9
Dalit	53	48	34	47	14	5
Adivasi (all community)	33	45	60	50	7	5
Others	38	38	32	28	30	34

Note: All figures in percentages

Voters' assessment of infrastructure

	Improved	Deteriorated	As good as before	As bad as before	No response
Condition of roads	48	28	12	11	1
Supply of electricity	74	8	14	4	1
Supply of drinking water	70	10	13	6	1
Condition of government schools	46	19	18	12	5
Condition of government hospitals	35	27	18	17	3

Note: All figures in percentages

Question asked: In your opinion, condition of these things have improved or worsened in Himachal Pradesh in the past five years?

Did different regions vote differently from the last Assembly elections?

Ramesh Chauhan
Vibha Attri

The regional divide is a more dominant factor in Himachal Pradesh than many other factors. The State is broadly divided into three regions namely Kangra, Mandi and Shimla.

Mandi, which is also the home ground for Jai Ram Thakur (the outgoing Chief Minister), was dominated by the BJP in the 2017 Assembly election. This time too, the BJP won 14 of the 19 seats and a vote share of 47.5% from this region (Table below). Moreover, the BJP led a watershed victory by sweeping nine of 10 seats in Mandi district. The lone seat went to the Congress. The party had drawn a blank in the 2017 election.

The BJP lost the Mandi Lok Sabha byelection in November 2021 which was probably the wake-up sign for the party. However, in these elections, Mandi was the face saver for Mr. Thakur and the BJP. The party regained its presence in this region. The Congress on the other hand was successful in five seats, which is three seats higher than what it had gained in the 2017 election.

Shimla stronghold

If Mandi was dominated by the BJP, the Congress traditionally draws its support base and leadership from the Shimla region. It maintained its hold in this region and won 15 of the 19 seats.

It was successful on seven of eight seats in Shimla district. In the 2017 election, the BJP had made inroads into this district by winning three of eight seats but could retain only one in this election.

The Congress also won four out of five seats in Solan district, three out of five in Sirmaur district and one seat in Kinnaur district.

Kingmaker Kangra

The Kangra region, which is the biggest region in terms of seats, is believed to be the game changer in Himachal politics. Whichever party leads in this region has a better chance of forming the government. More specifically, it is the Kangra district, comprising 15 seats, which is the real kingmaker.

Congress supporters celebrate in Dharamshala. AP

In the 2017 election, the Congress could win only three seats from here. However, this time, the party improved its performance and tally of seats by winning 10 seats, which is a gain of seven seats from the last election. Not only in terms of seats, but the greatest gain in terms of vote share was also from this region (3.4%).

The Congress's overall performance in this region helped as it added 20 seats to its kitty. Since the past few elections, the party that has bagged the majority of seats in the Kangra region has formed the government. The Congress's performance in this region reinforces the local belief that the road to Shimla (power) goes through Kangra. Usually, up till now, Hamirpur and Shimla districts used to dominate the politics in the State as the preceding Chief Ministers were usually from those districts. It was for the first time in the 2017 Assembly elections that someone from Mandi became the Chief Minister. It will be keenly watched how the regional dynamics now unfold in the wake of the Congress's victory.

(Ramesh Chauhan is professor at Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla. Vibha Attri is a researcher at Lokniti-CSDS)

Performance of parties in different regions of the State

Categories	Take seats	BJP				Congress				Other Parties			
		Won	Change-over	Vote %	Change-over	Won	Change-over	Vote %	Change-over	Won	Change-over	Vote %	Change-over
Overall	68	25	-19	43	-5.79	40	19	43.9	2.22	3	--	13.1	3.57
Kangra region	30	8	-12	43.37	-5.2	20	11	45.43	3.41	2	1	11.2	1.79
Mandi region	19	14	-2	47.55	-4.86	5	3	40.27	1.45	0	-1	12.18	3.41
Shimla region	19	3	-5	37.55	-7.84	15	5	45.18	1.1	1	0	17.27	6.74

Discontented farmers voted out the BJP in the hill State

It can be assessed that there was some level of dissatisfaction among the farmers due to the rise in Goods and Services Tax and the removal of subsidies, which may have had a causal effect on the saffron party's loss in the 2022 Assembly election

Jyoti Mishra
Aaliyia Malik

Agriculture is a significant source of income in Himachal Pradesh. Did farmer-related welfare policies affect the voting preference?

With specific State and Central policies directed towards farming, we analysed whether those engaged in agriculture or related activities have benefited from these schemes in an effort to assess if this has affected their voting preferences in the recent election.

When it comes to the Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme, close to half of the surveyed households benefited from this scheme. Voters from beneficiaries' households from the scheme voted equally for both the Congress and the BJP. Furthermore, out of the non-beneficiaries, 47% voted for the Congress, while 39% voted for the BJP. The variation among beneficiaries was quite stark when it came to the Prime Minister Fasal Bima Yojana, with 32% of the beneficiaries voting for the Congress and more than half (57%) voting for the BJP. Further, when it came to voters who were non-beneficiaries, more than two-fifths voted for the Congress, while 39% voted for the BJP (Table 1).

With the Centre's decision to increase the GST from 12% to 18% on the packaging of apple boxes, there was a widespread protest against the move.

Strong show: Congress supporters during an election rally in Kullu. PTI

Table 1: Beneficiaries of agriculture-related welfare schemes in the State

Schemes	Beneficiaries/ non-beneficiaries	Farmers voted for….		
		Congress	BJP	Others
Kisan Samman Nidhi	Beneficiaries (50)	43	43	14
	Non-beneficiaries (37)	47	39	14
Other agricultural scheme	Beneficiaries (9)	41	47	11
	Non-beneficiaries (73)	45	40	15
Prime Minister Fasal Bima Yojana	Beneficiaries (3)	32	57	12
	Non-beneficiaries (71)	44	39	16
Natural Farming	Beneficiaries (7)	44	43	12
	Non-beneficiaries (76)	45	40	15

Note: All figures are in percentages. The rest of the farming households were either not eligible or did not respond

Table 2: More than half of those who oppose rise in GST voted for Congress

Increase GST on the packaging of apple boxes	Overall	Congress	BJP	Others
Fully support	5	34	59	7
Somewhat support	5	34	55	12
Somewhat oppose	11	30	52	18
Fully oppose	50	52	34	14
No response	29	41	48	11

Note: All figures are in percentages

Table 3: Majority of those who oppose the removal of subsidies voted for Congress

Remove subsidy on things like fertilizers, seeds of farmers (cumulative percent)	Overall	Congress	BJP	Others
Fully support	9	30	57	13
Somewhat support	5	27	54	19
Somewhat oppose	11	30	55	15
Fully oppose	54	52	33	14
No response	21	43	48	9

Note: All figures are in percentages

Among the voters who were engaged in agriculture and related activities, nearly half of them (50%) fully opposed the decision, while support (fully support + somewhat support) for the move was only about 10%. Furthermore, among those who fully opposed the decision, more than half (52%) voted for the Congress while 34% voted for the BJP (Table 2).

While assessing voters' opinion on the Centre's decision to remove subsidies on fertilizers, seeds among other items, we found that more than half of the respondents (54%) fully opposed the decision while only 14% supported it to some degree (fully support + somewhat support). Among those who opposed the decision, more than half (52%) voted for the Congress while one-third (33%) voted for the BJP (Table 3). In reference to the timely payment of harvest, nearly 17% said it has improved in the past five years, while 22% said it has deteriorated in the BJP-led Himachal. A significant proportion (31%) did not respond.

Table 4: Timely payment of harvests deteriorated

Timely payment	%
Improved	17
Deteriorated	22
As good as before	13
As bad as before	17
No response	31

Question asked: In your opinion, timely payment of harvest has improved or worsened in the past five years?

With the victory of the Congress in the election, it can be assessed that there was some level of discontent among the farmers due to the rise in GST and removal of subsidies, which may have had a causal effect on the BJP's loss in the region.

(The authors are researchers at Lokniti-CSDS)

Old pension scheme promise strikes a chord

Vibha Attri
Nishtha Gupta

The old pension scheme (OPS) became a contentious issue before the Himachal Pradesh election, as the Congress which had introduced the scheme in Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh promised to do the same if it won in the State. It undoubtedly struck a chord with the people of the hill State.

Around 1.5 lakh employees in the State are covered under the new pension scheme.

The post-poll study by Lokniti-CSDS found that a staggering three-fourths of the voters (74%) in the State were aware of this electoral promise made by the Congress. Not only were the voters aware of the scheme but support for it was also quite high. Among those who were aware of the promise, an overwhelming 70% supported the restoration of the OPS (Table 1).

This support somewhat translated into votes as 65% of those who were in full support of the OPS voted for the Congress (Table 2). However, the party did not find the same support among those who partially supported the scheme, with only three in 10 supporting it and over half the voters supporting the BJP. Considering that half of the voters fully support this scheme, these figures for the Congress support becomes all the more significant.

Table 2: Vote by support for the OPS

	Party voted for Assembly Election 2022		
	Congress	BJP	Others
Fully support	65	25	10
Somewhat support	33	53	14
Somewhat oppose	18	79	3
Fully oppose	13	72	15

Note: All figures in percentages. Rest did not respond

Anger over Agnipath

Another burning issue was the newly introduced Agnipath scheme under which soldiers would be recruited into the armed forces on a contractual basis for a period of four years.

One in two voters said they opposed the policy fully or to some extent (Table 3). Only 19% were in full support and 14% gave partial support to this scheme. Among those who fully opposed the scheme, 55% voted for the Congress. While among those in partial support, the vote was divided equally among the BJP and the Congress (46% each). The BJP did have an upper hand among those who fully supported the scheme (six in 10) and those who said they somewhat supported the scheme (55%).

A geographical analysis of the support for the Agnipath scheme found that close to three-fifths (57%) of the western region, which includes Kangra district, opposed it. This region also has a high number of people in the armed forces. The corresponding figure for the eastern region was 43%.

The most significant criticism of the scheme has been its impact on the career prospects of the youth who may find it difficult to gain employment elsewhere after serving for four years. The findings of the survey also indicate the same as three of five people aged 18-25 disapproved of the scheme.

It is clear from the survey findings that policy missteps from the BJP, which adversely impacted key vote banks significantly, cost the ruling party and ended up benefiting the Congress which somewhat successfully tapped into the issues of the electorate.

(The authors are researchers at Lokniti-CSDS)

Table 1: High support for the old pension scheme

Fully support	50
Somewhat support	20
Somewhat oppose	6
Fully oppose	17

Note: All figures in percentages. Rest did not respond.
Question asked: Do you support or oppose the election promise of the Congress to bring back the OPS?

Table 3: Not much support for the Agnipath scheme

Fully support	19
Somewhat support	14
Somewhat oppose	8
Fully oppose	42

Note: All figures in percentages. Rest did not respond.
Question asked: Do you support or oppose the recruitment in the Army under the Central government's Agnipath scheme?

Lack of chief ministerial face did not become a hurdle this election

Suhas Palshikar

A striking feature of the Assembly election in Himachal Pradesh was the absence of any visible leadership cult. The BJP sought to mobilise voters by organising rallies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Unlike elsewhere, the popularity of Mr. Modi, too, did not help the BJP to retain power.

In the post-poll survey, voters were asked as to what extent the Modi government fulfilled their expectations. More than four in 10 said the Modi government fulfilled their expectations to a large extent. Among these voters, understandably, 68% voted for the BJP.

But more than three in 10 voters said the Modi government fulfilled their expectations to 'some' extent and among these voters, more than half voted for the Congress and only one-third voted for the BJP (Table 1). Even in the case of choice of Chief Minister, respondents did not gravitate toward any particular leader – except that a large proportion did mention the then Chief Minister, Jai Ram Thakur. Usually, the visibility of the incumbent contributes to people naming that person as the desired choice. But in the case of Himachal, more people said they did not mind if anyone became the Chief Minister (Table 2).

Voters were also aware of the factionalism both within the BJP and the Congress (Table 3) and both parties, being cautious due to factionalism, desisted from announcing their chief ministerial candidate in advance. This further led to the election taking place in a leadership vacuum – something that has become rare in Indian elections of late.

(Suhas Palshikar taught political science and is chief editor of Studies in Indian Politics)

Table 1: Did Modi government fulfil expectations?

Modi succeeded in fulfilling expectation	Congress	BJP	Others	Overall
To a large extent	21	68	11	43
To some extent	51	33	16	33
Not much	75	12	13	10
Not at all	78	6	16	10
No response	71	22	7	4

Note: All figures are in percentages.
Question asked: To what extent was it successful in fulfilling the expectations you had from the Modi government at the Centre — to a large extent, to some extent, not much or not at all?

Table 2: Who would you like to be the next CM?

	Preferred CM
Jai Ram Thakur	22
Anurag Thakur	4
Vikramaditya Singh	4
Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu	3
Mukesh Agnihotri	2
Pratibha Singh	2
Asha Kumari	2
Any other BJP leader	4
Any other Congress leader	5
Any other leaders	6
Anyone can become Chief Minister	29
No response	17

Note: All figures are in percentages. It was an open-ended question and no names were provided. Question asked: After the Assembly election, who do you want to see as the next Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh?

Table 3: Voter awareness of factionalism

	%
Congress	27
BJP	20
Aam Aadmi Party	0
Any other party	4
No response	49

Note: All figures are in percentages. Question asked: Which party, according to you, has the most factionalism in Himachal Pradesh?

What's the score?

For most schemes, nearly half of the voters did not receive the benefits

Scheme	Yes	Did not get
Child Nutrition Scheme	30	48
Grihini Suvidha Yojana	37	48
Himcare Scheme	31	55
Sahara Yojana	4	73
Swavalamban Yojana	2	76
Startup Scheme	2	76
Beti Hai Anmol Yojana	3	69

Note: The others did not respond or were not eligible for the mentioned schemes

More than half of the voters have benefited from cheap ration

Benefited from	Yes	No
Free ration	33	54
Cheap ration	56	33

Note: The others did not respond or were not eligible for the mentioned schemes

Most of the Himachal Pradesh voters have not reaped the policy benefits from the government

Schemes	Yes	No
Awas Yojana	11	75
National Rural Health Mission	16	69
Pension/Allowance	44	42
Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana	5	70
Jan Dhan Yojana	15	68
Digital India Programme	5	70
Skill India Scheme	3	71
Make in India Scheme	2	71
Prime Minister Crop Insurance Scheme	2	69

Note: The others did not respond or were not eligible for the mentioned schemes

The Congress did better among women voters and the BJP among men voters

	Congress		BJP		Others	
	2022	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017
Male	43	42	44	49	13	9
Female	45	41	42	48	13	11

Note: All figures are in percentages

Despite BJP loss, no visible sign of anti-incumbency

Ramesh Chauhan
Nishtha Gupta

The people of Himachal Pradesh seem to have shown satisfaction with the overall performance of the Jai Ram Thakur government. The Congress's margin of victory remained narrow, with the party winning by less than 2,000 votes in 15 seats. The low margins can be explained by people's general sense of satisfaction with the incumbent government.

The post-poll study found that 32% of people were fully satisfied with the functioning of the BJP rule in the State (Table 1). On the other hand, only two in 10 voters were fully dissatisfied with the government.

When it came to rating the performance of sitting MLAs, 63% voters said they were happy with the work done by the local Congress MLA, while 34% reported being dissatisfied. On the other hand, 55% of people were satisfied with the work done by their local BJP MLA and 43% said they were unhappy (Table 2).

Satisfaction with the sitting MLAs helped both parties, as eight in 10 of those satisfied with the sitting MLAs (whether BJP or Congress) voted for the respective party.

Among those who were fully dissatisfied with the work done by the sitting Congress MLA, six in 10 voted for the BJP. However, the Congress was successful in attracting a greater proportion of those who were completely dissatisfied with the work done by a sitting BJP MLA, with seven in 10 voting for the Congress.

Table 2: Satisfaction with the sitting MLA

Party	Fully satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Fully dissatisfied	No response
Congress MLA	37	26	13	21	3
BJP MLA	30	25	9	34	2

Note: All figures in percentages

Modi government

Though the BJP lost the election in the State, the people of Himachal Pradesh are still strongly in support of the Modi government. More than half of the voters said they were fully satisfied with the BJP regime at the Centre (Table 3), with only 16% of people saying they were unhappy with the work done by the Central government.

In fact, when it came to determining the factors behind their voting choices, most people ranked the performance of the Modi government slightly higher than that of the BJP government at the State level. While 26% of people said the work done by the Modi government informed their voting choice, only 23% of people credited the performance of the Jairam Thakur government.

Thus, it can be said that it was not a strong anti-incumbency wave but a host of other factors that contributed to the BJP's defeat in the 2022 Himachal Pradesh election.

(Ramesh Chauhan is professor at Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, and Nishtha Gupta is a researcher at Lokniti-CSDS)

Table 1: Satisfied with the BJP government in the State

	(%)
Fully satisfied	32
Somewhat satisfied	32
Somewhat dissatisfied	12
Fully dissatisfied	21

Note: Rest gave no response.
Question asked: Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the work done by the BJP government of Himachal Pradesh during the past five years?

Table 3: Satisfaction with the Central government

	(%)
Fully satisfied	52
Somewhat satisfied	29
Somewhat dissatisfied	7
Fully dissatisfied	9

Note: Rest gave no response
Question asked: Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the work done by the BJP/NDA-led government at the Centre during the past three and half years?

From Page One

Sukhvinder Sukhu is Himachal Pradesh CM

"Yesterday [Friday], the CLP members had authorised the party high command to pick the legislature party leader. Today, the party's high command selected Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu as the CLP leader," said Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, who is one of the party's observers for Himachal Pradesh.

Mr. Sukhu said the priority of the government would be to fulfil all the promises made to the people of the State. A former party State unit president, Mr. Sukhu had won from the Nadaun Assembly seat.

A party source confirmed that Mr. Sukhu had received the approval of the top leadership and the CLP was a mere formality. Mr. Sukhu edged the other contenders including Pratibha Singh and outgoing CLP leader Mr. Agnihotri. It is learnt that a majority of MLAs supported Mr. Sukhu.

To pacify the rival camps, a formula was devised in which Mr. Sukhu was declared the Chief Minister while Mr. Agnihotri was accommodated as Deputy CM.

Cyclone kills 5, uproots hundreds of trees

Other areas that got heavy rain included Panapakkam in Ranipet district (20 cm) and Kancheepuram (19 cm). The cyclone had dumped heavy rain in and around Chennai, and Avadi recorded the highest amount within the city at 17 cm.

The system weakened into a well-marked low pressure area over the interior parts of north T.N. on Saturday evening. It is very likely to move towards the west-southwest and weaken further. Rain bands had shifted to the interior parts of north T.N. as the system moved further inland.

While rain intensity largely reduced over the northern coastal areas on Saturday, places such as Vellore (3.4 cm); Tirupattur (1.2 cm); Dharmapuri (1.1cm); Kalavai in Ranipet district (2 cm) continued to receive rainfall between 8.30 a.m. and 7.30 p.m. On Sunday, light to moderate rain may continue over many places, with isolated heavy rain over 12 districts.

Rocket-type grenade fired at police station

The police station is situated on the Amritsar-Bathinda highway. According to the police, the grenade was fired at Sarhali police station, but hit the adjacent Saanjh Kendra building at 11.22 p.m. on Friday. The grenade reportedly did not explode, and the rocket launcher and propeller have been recovered. A few windowpanes of the building were shattered.

Punjab Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav told reporters that the grenade was military-grade hardware, which in all possibility had been smuggled from across the border. There was a clear indication that it was a strategy of the "neighbouring country to bleed India with a thousand wounds", he said.

Mohali attack

Mr. Yadav said the current attack had similarities to the RPG attack on the Punjab Police Intelligence wing at Mohali. In May, a projectile loaded with trinitrotoluene explosive was fired at the headquarters building of the Punjab Police Intelligence wing at Mohali.

Hitting out at the AAP government, the Opposition parties said it had completely failed to maintain law and order in the State.

Badri cow breed of Uttarakhand to get a genetic boost

SPECIAL

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

To increase the productivity of its indigenous Badri cow, which grazes on herbs that grow in the Himalayas, Uttarakhand is now planning for its genetic enhancement.

At the recent *chintan shivir* (brainstorming session) that Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami had with senior officials of the State, the Animal Husbandry Department proposed to use sex-sorted semen technology to improve the stock of the petite Badri cattle. Officials proposed to opt for the embryo transfer method to produce more cattle of a high genetic stock.

Apart from Badri ghee, which costs ₹3,000 to ₹5,000 a kg, the State is looking at the marketing potential of *gaumutra ark* (distilled cow urine), cow dung, and *Panchgavya* (five products of the cow: curd, ghee, dung and urine).

Talking about the plan, B.V.R.C. Purushottam, Secretary, Animal Husbandry, told *The Hindu* that the Badri cow, the first registered cattle breed of Uttarakhand, had been certified by the National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources.

New technologies

"The issue with this variety of cattle is that its milk production capacity is quite less as it gives one to three litres of milk a day. To make the farmers of Uttarakhand breed Badri and not to shift to high milk-producing alternative breeds such as Jersey, we have decided to opt for multiple ovulation embryo transfer (MOET), a conventional embryo flush, which is the most common procedure used in advanced cattle breeding," Mr. Purushottam said.

The official also said that ovum pick-up in vitro fertilisation (IVF) was the other technology that would be used to increase the yield. The proposal to introduce assisted reproductive technologies (ART) for the project, to generate employment and entrepreneurship through native Badri cattle productivity enhancement, will cost ₹50 crore.

Vocal for local: The Badri cow in a farm at Nariyal village in Champawat district of Uttarakhand. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

As proposed in the *chintan shivir* held in Mussoorie in the last week of November, the State aims to achieve its targets in 10 years. The *shivir* (session) aimed to prepare a road map for Uttarakhand as the State nears 25 years of its formation.

As the plan includes increasing the productivity of the native cattle breed by use of sex-sorted semen to curtail unproductive male population and the production of quality Badri studs for semen production through the embryo transfer technology, the State had set up a nucleus breeding bull mother farm at Nariyal village in Champawat district.

At present, Uttarakhand has nearly seven lakh Badri cattle, among which 4.79 lakh are cows.

The Badri breed derived its name from the holy shrine of Char Dham at Badrinath. Possessing a balanced gait for the hills, the cattle breed is small in size with long legs and varied body colours – black, brown, red, white or grey. This breed is comparatively more resistant to diseases, mostly due to its eating habits.

Grazes on herbs

Officials say what makes the Badri cow stand out is the Himalayan environment, as she eats herbs and does not ingest polythene and other harmful things, and is far from toxic pollution.

"As the Badri cow grazes only on herbs and shrubs available in the mountains, its milk has rich medicinal content and high organic value. The same is the USP of its produce for which its ghee is quite expensive. Its urine has a high value due to its feeding and habitat. The lactation milk yield ranges from 547 kg to 657 kg, with an average milk fat content of 4%," said R.S. Negi, CEO of the Uttarakhand Livestock Development Board.

Mr. Negi said that Badri cow products were being sold online by Hetha Organics and Badri Ghee was sold by the Uttarakhand Cooperative Dairy Federation under its brand name Aanchal.

"We sell cow urine distillate to Hetha Organics at ₹28 a litre and undistilled *gaumutra* at ₹5 a litre. We also sell fresh Badri cow dung to a couple of entrepreneurs at ₹1 a kg from which they make products," he added.

Aseem Rawat, the founder of Hetha Organics, said that the firm had been working on selling and manufacturing indigenous cow products for the past eight years.

Bhupendra Patel to be sworn in as Gujarat Chief Minister tomorrow

Newly elected Bharatiya Janata Party MLAs chose him as the leader of the legislature party at a meeting in Gandhinagar on Saturday; Patel, along with State party chief, flew to Delhi to finalise the names of Ministers in his new Cabinet

The Hindu Bureau
AHMEDABAD

Bhupendra Patel will continue as the Chief Minister of Gujarat for a second term, with the MLAs-elect of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) electing him as the leader of the legislature party at a meeting in Gandhinagar on Saturday.

He will be sworn in as the Chief Minister on Monday in the State capital.

On Sunday, Mr. Patel was unanimously declared the leader of the legislature party at the meeting held at the BJP's State headquarters.

"The newly elected MLAs met where the proposal to name Bhupendra Patel as the Chief Minister of Gujarat was unanimously approved," the BJP said in a statement. His name was proposed by Kanubhai Desai, senior legislator and Finance Minister in the previous government, and was supported by three other senior legislators. The meeting was held in the presence of the party observers, Rajnath Singh, Arjun Munda and B.Y. Yeddyurappa, to elect the leader of the party's legislators.

New innings: BJP leaders Bhupendra Patel, right, and C.R. Patil at the newly elected BJP MLAs meeting at the party's regional office 'Kamalam' in Gandhinagar on Saturday. VIJAY SONEJI

After the meeting, Mr. Patel and the State party chief C.R. Patil, along with other senior leaders, called on Governor Acharya Devrat to inform him about the election of the legislature party leader.

The Governor has invited Mr. Patel for the swearing-in function on December 12. In the evening, both Mr. Patel and Mr. Patil flew to Delhi to finalise the names of the Ministers in the new government in a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. On Friday, Mr. Patel, 60, resigned as the Chief Minister to pave the way for the formation of a new government in the State after the BJP registered a landslide victory in the recently concluded Assembly election.

Mr. Patel won a second term as MLA from the Ghatlodia Assembly constituency in Ahmedabad district, with a winning margin of 1.92 lakh votes.

In September last year, he replaced Vijay Rupani as the Chief Minister.

The BJP registered a historic victory in Gujarat by clinching 156 seats in the 182-member House, much higher than its tally of 99 seats in 2017.

SC to hear Bilkis Bano's petition on Tuesday

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on December 13 a petition filed by Bilkis Bano, who was gang-raped during the 2002 Gujarat riots when seven members of her family were also killed, challenging the remission of sentence of 11 convicts in the case by the State government.

A Bench of Justices Ajay Rastogi and Bela M. Trivedi is likely to take up the petition of Ms. Bano, who has also filed a separate prayer seeking a review of the top court's May 13 order on a plea by a convict. The top court had asked the Gujarat government to consider the petition for premature release of the convicts in terms of its policy of July 9, 1992 about deciding a remission petition within a period of two months.

In her petition against the grant of remission which had led to the release of the convicts on August 15, Ms. Bano said the State government passed a mechanical order completely ignoring the requirement of law as laid down by the top court.

SC allows anticipatory bail to OTT platform head

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has granted anticipatory bail to Amazon Prime Video's India head Aparna Purohit in FIRs lodged over the Web series *Tandav*. A Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and M.M. Sundresh granted the relief after noting that Ms. Purohit has been cooperating in the investigation.

The top court had earlier on March 5, 2021, granted interim protection from arrest to Ms. Purohit.

She has been accused of inappropriate depiction of Uttar Pradesh Police personnel, Hindu deities and an adverse portrayal of a character playing the Prime Minister in the Web series. The FIR was lodged at the Rabupura police station of Greater Noida in January 2021.

Semi-finals of BLoC Boardroom Challenge held across cities

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

A team from IIM Trichy won the Chennai leg of the businessline on Campus (BLoC) Boardroom Challenge 2022. The team, comprising Ankit Sahu, Jay Vaishnani, and Pratik Nayan Dash emerged the winners, and a team from LIBA Chennai comprising Swetha A., Jessintha Rosaline R., and Dhiya Deepak was the runner-up.

K.S. Rao, Senior Vice-President & Head, Investor Education and Distribution Development, Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC Ltd; Lokeshwarri S.K., Data Editor, businessline; Vishwadeep Kuila of Brand Vectors and executive coach Siva Kumar made up the jury for the Chennai semi-finals.

In the semi-final round held in different cities, students had to present growth strategies for a biotechnology company suggesting what kind of markets, products and investors would help the company maximise stakeholder value.

In the Bengaluru semi-finals, two teams from IIM-Bangalore bagged the top places. Balaji M.P., Achuthan K. and Sanjeeth Rajeshwaran were the winners, while Rahil Sonkusare, Debayan Dutta Chowdhury and Naveen Verma were the runners-up.

SIBM Pune emerged as the winner in the Pune semi-finals. The team consisted of Mohitsinh Rayjada, Anubhav Kumar and Dhairya Shah. Swapnil Sarkar, Giri Charan Kalyan Ganji and Deeksha Pandey from IIM Nagpur were the runners-up.

In the Hyderabad semi-finals, Sarthak Paikray, Utkarsh Choudhary and Aditya Agarwal from IIM Sambalpur were the winners. Two teams emerged runners-up: Ayush Nahak, Anupam Nag and Ankita Pal from Xaviers Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar; and Sadvitha Gona and Adhokshaj S.K. of Administrative Staff College of India. A team from JBIMS, Mumbai, comprising Jitesh Patil, Shyamli Nimkar and Mahesh Olambe, won the Mumbai leg. A team from SPJIMR Mumbai – Nikita Philips, Arpit Jain, and Divyansh Agrawal – finished second and also locked a spot in the finals as 'Jury's Choice'.

In the Delhi semi-finals, Sharath Chandra, Aditya Vikram and G. Bhanusekhar Reddy, from IIM Amritsar were the winners; and Shaurya Pratap Singh, Meet Mehta and Siddhartha Raj, from IRMA, emerged runners-up.

A team from XLRI Jamshedpur – Kushankur Datta, Debajyoti Das and Varun Mikkilineni – won the Kolkata leg; and Shreya Parti and Himanshu Bulchandani from IIM Shillong were the runners-up.

The 2022 edition of the contest is sponsored by Aditya Birla Sun Life Mutual Fund while the Exchange Partner is BSE and Knowledge Partner is Brand Vectors.

EC data show a last-minute surge in voting in second phase of Gujarat election

The Hindu Bureau
AHMEDABAD

After voting for the final phase of the Gujarat Assembly election ended at 5 p.m. on December 5, the Election Commission put the turnout in the 93 constituencies at 58.8%. However, the next day, the EC revised the figure to 65.3%.

The 6.5 percentage point jump reflects a last-minute surge in the turnout, as more than 16 lakh voters would have cast their ballot after the 5 p.m. deadline, indicating that so many people were already in the queues at the polling booths at 5 p.m. and they all exercised their franchise.

Normally, those who are in the queues at 5 p.m. are allowed to vote.

A woman after voting in the second phase in Ahmedabad on December 5. VIJAY SONEJI

In the first phase on December 1, the initial figure of 60.11% was revised to 63.14%.

The overall turnout for both phases stood at 64.33%, a drop of more than 4 percentage point from the turnout registered in the 2017 election. The nearly 2 percentage point higher turnout in the second phase from that of the first phase can be attributed to the EC's appeal to the voters made in the middle of the polls as the first phase polling was low particularly in urban areas.

In a rare appeal in the middle of the election; the poll body tweeted on December 3: "Urban apathy continues unabated from Shimla to Surat. ECI appeals to voters of Gujarat to come out in large numbers during second phase to compensate for low voting in 1st phase."

Chief Election Commissioner Rajeev Kumar, in a press release said, "Gujarat cities have shown a similar urban apathy trend during voting on December 1, thus pulling down the percentage of voting in the first phase. In the second phase, people must come out in large numbers to compensate for the low voting in phase one."

INBRIEF

Embrace new technology in warfare, says Lt. Gen. Dimri

As many as 344 cadets of 151 regular and 134 technical graduate courses successfully passed out from the Indian Military Academy (IMA), Dehradun on Saturday. They include 30 cadets from 11 friendly foreign countries. Lt. Gen. Yogendra Dimri advised the newly inducted officers to embrace new technologies such as nano-technology and drones, which he said are the new generation weapons used in present-day warfare. "While you all have been given the finest training of warfare at the IMA, I just want to tell you that nanotechnology and drones are new realities of warfare and our future generations in the armed forces must be prepared to face," Mr. Dimri said.

President speaks at NHRC to mark Human Rights Day

President Droupadi Murmu spoke at an event hosted by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to mark Human Rights Day in New Delhi on Saturday. She said, "Climate change is knocking on the doors. People in poorer nations are going to pay a heavier price for the degradation of our environment. We must consider the environmental dimension of justice now." She appealed that humans must learn to treat nature and biodiversity with dignity and respect. "We must learn, rather relearn to treat nature with dignity, she added. This year's theme is Dignity, Freedom, and Justice for All.' PTI

IGI airport to talk with airlines to reduce peak hour flights

The Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi is in a dialogue with the airlines to explore the cutting down of the number of flights during peak hours in order to deal with overcrowding, as the airport sees high passenger volumes, according to sources. There have been a large number of complaints from travellers about their experience with long, serpentine queues at check-in counters and the security check. This forced Minister of Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia to call for a meeting with top airport officials earlier this week. The Director-General of Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, Zulfiquar Hasan, visited the airport on Saturday.

Energy panel invites views on Electricity (Amendment) Bill

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Energy, headed by BJP MP Jagdambika Pal, has invited views and suggestions from the public on the controversial Electricity (Amendment) Bill. Both the farmers' organisations and the trade unions have been opposing the Bill, saying that it will result in huge increase in power bills and privatisation of the sector. The Centre had offered wider consultations while the Bill is taken by the Committee. The Bill was referred to the panel during the Monsoon Session of Parliament for examination and report to Parliament. The Samyukt Kisan Morcha and various trade unions of workers in the power sector had said they will submit their suggestions to the panel.

SUDOKU

		2		3			9	
	3				8	7		
4			7			3		
7	2						3	
	5	4		6		9	2	
	9						8	5
		7			5			9
		9	1				5	
	8			4		1		

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

1	2	7	5	8	9	4	6	3
3	9	8	4	6	1	2	5	7
6	4	5	3	7	2	8	9	1
9	5	1	7	3	8	6	4	2
2	8	3	1	4	6	5	7	9
4	7	6	9	2	5	3	1	8
7	6	9	2	5	3	1	8	4
8	1	2	6	9	4	7	3	5
5	3	4	8	1	7	9	2	6

Parliament must examine issue of age of consent: CJI Chandrachud

Chief Justice says the law criminalises all sexual activities for those under the age of 18, even if consent was factually present between two minors; a study shows that in a number of cases, there was romantic relationship between victim and accused

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud on Saturday appealed to Parliament to have a relook at the issue of age of consent under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, as it posed difficulties for judges examining cases of consensual sexual intercourse between two adolescents.

"In my time as a judge, I have observed that this category of case poses difficult questions for judges across the spectrum. There is a growing concern surrounding this issue which must be considered by the Legislature," the CJI said at a national stakeholders' consultation on the POCSO Act, which completes 10 years.

In 2012, the Act raised the age of consent to 18 from 16.

The two-day consultation, which started on Saturday, is being conducted by the Supreme Court's Committee on Juvenile Justice and is part of its annual stakeholders' meet.

> In my time as a judge, I have observed that this category of case poses difficult questions for judges across the spectrum. There is a growing concern surrounding this issue which must be considered by the Legislature
>
> **D.Y. CHANDRACHUD**
> Chief Justice of India

Explaining the peculiar challenge posed by the Act, he said the law criminalised all sexual activities for those under the age of 18, even if consent was factually present between two minors.

He shared the dais with Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani; Justice Ravinder Bhat, Chairperson of the Supreme Court's Juvenile Justice Committee; Justice B.V. Nagarathna; and UNICEF's Country Representative Cynthia McCaffrey. Among the audience were other Supreme Court judges, High Court and POCSO court judges.

The CJI's comments come at a time when several High Courts have called for an urgent need for legal reform to deal with cases involving consensual sexual intercourse between adolescents. The Madras High Court recently said that it was "eagerly" waiting for the Legislature to reduce the age of consent in the POCSO Act from 18, as it upheld the conviction of a man sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for having kidnapped and repeatedly raped a 17-year-old girl.

In *Vijayalakshmi vs State Rep.* the Inspector of Police, the Madras High Court questioned the wisdom of criminalising such acts. In *Sabari vs Inspector of Police*, too, the Madras High Court recommended that the age of consent be revised to 16.

Acquittal rate

The evidence presented before the stakeholders included a study carried out by Enfold Proactive Health Trust, Bengaluru, which found that 93.8% of such cases tried under the POCSO Act ended in acquittal after consuming a median time of 1.4 to 2.3 years from the filing of an FIR to disposal by courts.

These findings were based on an analyses of 1,715 such cases. In one in every four cases registered and disposed of under the POCSO Act, either the "victim" or her family or the special court said that there was a romantic relationship between the victim and the accused.

In more evidence of how the law is misused to punish adolescents involved in consensual sexual intercourse, the study found that 80.2% of such cases were filed by parents or relatives of the girl involved in such a relationship. Girls in such cases, however, do not support the prosecution, and in 87.9% of the cases, they expressly admitted to having a romantic or consensual relationship with the accused.

A similar study in 2018 by the Centre for the Child and the Law at National Law School of India University (CCL-NLSIU) revealed that these constituted 21.2% of the cases in Andhra Pradesh, 15.6% in Assam, 21.5% in Delhi, 21.8% in three districts of Karnataka, and 20.5% in Maharashtra.

The report released by the Enfold Proactive Health Trust recommends legal reforms to the POCSO Act and the Indian Penal Code (IPC) to decriminalise consensual sexual acts involving adolescents above the age of 16, while ensuring that those above 16 and below 18 continue to be protected against non-consensual acts under the POCSO Act.

Justice Dipankar Datta

Justice Datta elevated as Supreme Court judge

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Union government has notified the elevation of Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court Dipankar Datta to the Supreme Court, highly placed sources said.

Sources have confirmed that the Supreme Court Collegium's recommendation has been approved by the government and Justice Datta's file has been sent to the President. He is expected to be elevated to the top court by next week.

On September 27, the Collegium headed by the then CJI U.U. Lalit recommended Justice Datta for the apex court. Justice Datta was appointed the Chief Justice of Bombay High Court on April 19, 2020. He enrolled with the Bar Council of West Bengal (W.B.) in November 1989.

Verification of bail sureties in Kappan case not completed

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

Around three months have passed since bail sureties were provided for journalist Siddique Kappan in the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) case against him, as per the Supreme Court order, but the verification of the sureties is still pending in Uttar Pradesh.

Talking to *The Hindu*, Raihanath Kappan, Mr. Kappan's wife, said the "endless delay" in verifying the given sureties was unjustifiable. "Too disappointed to learn that the verification of bail conditions are not yet complete even three months after the SC order," she said.

The court on September 9 granted bail to Mr. Kappan in the UAPA case, stating that "every citizen has the right to free expression". But, the journalist is still in jail as he is yet to get relief in the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) case registered by the ED.

Mr. Kappan's legal team, which is pursuing the matter, argue that the delay in completion of the verification process literally means "forbidding justice".

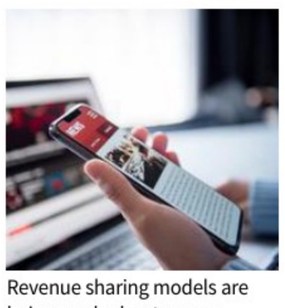
"Three months have passed since we provided the sureties for bail in the UAPA case as per the SC order of September 9. Not to mention the freedom of expression, but without even the minimum amount of responsibility from the authorities to acknowledge the sureties received, it is literally forbidding justice. We are expecting to get the bail conditions fulfilled at the earliest by verifying the sureties, to not paralyse the process," Mohamed Dhanish K.S., Kappan's lawyer, told *The Hindu*.

Experts want solution to rebalance relation between publisher, platform

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Leading experts from Canada and the United States have called upon countries around the world, including India, to join hands across borders and replicate Canada's upcoming news media bargaining code. During the virtual second Digital News Publishers Association (DNPA) Dialogue on Friday, the experts exchanged ideas on how to restore fairness to the relationship between news publishers and Big Tech platforms.

Taylor Owen, Beaverbrook Chair in Media, Ethics and Communication at Canada's Max Bell School of Public Policy; Courtney Radsch, Fellow at UCLA Institute for Technology, Law and Policy in the U.S.; and Paul Deegan, president and chief executive officer of News Media Canada; agreed to that the voluntary deals that tech companies strike with news outlets were not enough.



Revenue sharing models are being worked out. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Mr. Owen, Ms. Radsch, and Mr. Deegan counted India among the countries that needed to show the rest of the world how to rebalance the publisher-platform relationship in terms of revenue-sharing, transparency, and accountability. The speakers said the Canadian version of the news media bargaining code was more robust and transparent than the one Australia brought into effect in 2021.

Stating that the U.S., Europe, Canada, India and some countries in Europe were doing a good job of designing a broader framework, Ms. Radsch said: "...they should collaborate globally. In fact, UNESCO is building a global model that could go on to insulate the legislative effort in various countries, such as Botswana and Libya, where legislation can get killed...we just saw that happen in the U.S. with the JCPA (Journalism Competition and Preservation Act) getting dropped."

She said UNESCO's effort will help countries come together and have a global regulatory framework using legislation."

Mr. Deegan added: "Great to see other countries are picking it up. Australia is already off the mark. Next, there's Canada. And then India, New Zealand, and many others are looking at Canada very closely. In fact, we're all looking at the U.S." Owen spelt out the areas in which Canada's Bill was "better than the Australian one".

The Online News Act in Canada aims to make digital news intermediaries negotiate revenue-sharing with news publishers for use of their news content. It empowers the telecom commission to monitor how Big Tech firms deal with news outlets. The draft law, termed Bill C-18, was introduced in Parliament earlier this year and is likely to be cleared by the end of spring next year, Mr. Deegan said.

Mr. Owen and Ms. Radsch also spoke about "a pushback from tech platforms that should serve as a lesson for India as it plans to devise legislation aimed at persuading Big Tech firms to deal with news publishers with more fairness".

Moodbidri gears up to host 25th International Cultural Jamboree of Scouts and Guides

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

Known for the thousand pillar Jain Basadi, Moodbidri town in Dakshina Kannada is gearing up to host the 25th International Cultural Jamboree of the Scouts and Guides for a week from December 21.

According to M. Mohan Alva, Dakshina Kannada District Chief Commissioner, Bharat Scouts and Guides, an international jamboree is being organised in India for the first time. The theme of the jamboree is 'Culture for Youth Solidarity'.

Organised by Alva's Education Foundation, Moodbidri, which is headed by Dr. Alva, the week-long activities will be held at various locations on the 100 acre campus of the foundation. Briefing pressmen in Moodbidri on Saturday, after showing the preparations for the jamboree, Dr. Alva said that 50,000 students, who are Scouts, Guides, Rovers and Rangers, have registered for participating in the jamboree. In addition, their 10,000 trainees will attend the event. Besides 3,000 volunteers will be on duty during the event and prior to the event. The participants will include students, trainees from 10 other countries.

Preparations are on at Alva's Institute at Moodbidri in Karnataka to host the jamboree. H.S. MANJUNATH

The teams of students and trainees will begin arriving at the campus from December 15 onwards, he said. He said that the cultural programmes will be held from 5 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. simultaneously on 10 stages at different locations in the campus. The programmes have been bifurcated as those meant for children and for the public. The participating students will exhibit their various adventure skills, talents and culture beside rendering community service in the area.

Dr. Alva said that five melas on the themes - agriculture and horticulture, science, books, art and culture, and food - will be an added attraction at the jamboree.

Scientists from ISRO, DRDO, IISc., and HAL will involve themselves in the science mela which also includes stargazing.

The participants will be freely accommodated in 20 hostels of the foundation and served free food.

There will be an exhibition of 300 photographs taken by well-known photographers. In addition there will be magic shows by noted magicians for children and public.

'Illegal' house of wanted Jaish militant demolished

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

The authorities on December 10 demolished a house allegedly built on encroached land in south Kashmir's Pulwama and belonged to the Nengroos, whose son, Ashiq Nengroo, was designated as a terrorist affiliated to the Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) by the Centre in April.

Officials said a house allegedly built on a piece of encroached government land was demolished at New Colony in Pulwama. A crane was used to demolish the house.

It's for the first time that the authorities demolished a house of any militant. The Centre invoked the provisions of the UAPA and designated Nengroo as a terrorist.

MANILA

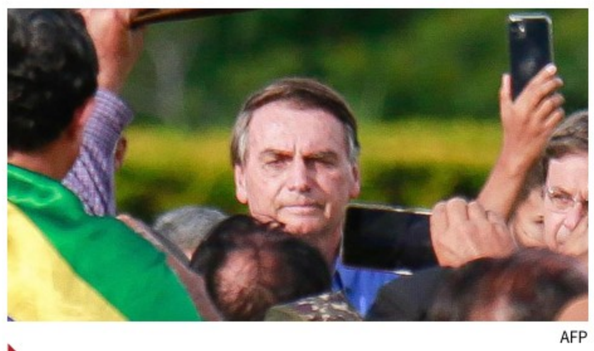
Philippines protesters decry alleged injustices under Marcos

REUTERS

Hundreds of people marched in the Philippine capital on Saturday protesting what they said was a rising number of extrajudicial killings and other injustices under the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. Around 800 protesters took part in the rally, which coincided with the International Human Rights Day. AP

BRASILIA

After 40 days, Bolsonaro breaks silence on his election loss to Lula



AFP

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro broke his uncharacteristic silence about his electoral defeat on Friday, saying it "hurts my soul". Mr. Bolsonaro had not spoken publicly since his narrow loss to leftist rival Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in bitterly-fought run-off elections on October 30, and he has only made one public appearance. AFP

HONG KONG

Hong Kong tycoon Jimmy Lai jailed over five years for fraud

AP

Pro-democracy Hong Kong tycoon Jimmy Lai was sentenced to five years and nine months in prison for fraud after being convicted of violating a lease contract for the headquarters of a newspaper he used to run. He has been behind bars since December 2020 and has served 20 months for unauthorised assemblies. REUTERS

OSLO

Ukrainian, Russian Nobel Peace winners slam Putin's 'insane' war

AFP

A trio from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus accepted their Nobel Peace Prize, calling for the fight to continue against Russian leader Vladimir Putin's "criminal" invasion of Ukraine. "The people of Ukraine want peace. But peace cannot be reached by a country under attack laying down its arms," one of them said. AFP

Opposition seeks Hasina's resignation in massive rally

Seven lawmakers of Bangladesh Nationalist Party resign from government calling it 'autocratic'. Police arrest several senior leaders of the outfit, including secretary-general Mirza Fakhrul

Press Trust of India
DHAKA

Show of strength: Nearly 1,00,000 supporters of the BNP converged in Dhaka on Saturday to protest against the government of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and demand new elections. AFP

Tens of thousands of supporters of Bangladesh's main Opposition party BNP on Saturday held a "grand rally" in the capital here demanding Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation and fresh elections.

Seven lawmakers of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) announced their resignations to protest against the government led by Ms. Hasina. Dhaka's Golapbagh area, the venue of the rally, was under heavy security surveillance.

The party activists chanted "Sheikh Hasina is a vote thief" as the party leaders addressed the rally eastern part of the capital Dhaka city.

Residents of the capital, including office-goers, faced difficulties and many were seen waiting for public transport on the road since morning. Activists say the rally could attract 1 million people.

The ruling Awami League activists also staged several pro-government processions.

"We had joined the Parliament in line with the party's decision but now there is no difference between staying or quitting...we have already emailed our resignations (to parliament secretariat)," BNP lawmaker Rumin Farhana told the rally.

She called the government an "autocratic" one and alleged it came to power by "rigging the polls", torturing the Opposition party leaders, carrying out forced disappearances, extra-judicial killings, and engaging in corruption.

"I am resigning in protest," Ms. Farhana said, adding that she and six other fellow BNP lawmakers would deliver their resignations by hand to the Speaker's office on Sunday.

The police arrested several senior BNP leaders, including secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, and scores of activists under different charges ahead of the rally.

Some 20,000 law enforcement personnel have been deployed at the venue to avert any untoward incident.

The BNP is demanding Prime Minister Hasina's resignation in favour of fresh elections under a caretaker government instead of ruling Awami League, fearing the polls to be rigged by her administration. Bangladesh will hold its next general election in 2024.

Resurgence of far-right extremism is a cause of concern for Germany

NEWS ANALYSIS

G. Sampath

Thwarted plan: Among the 25 arrested suspects on Wednesday was aristocrat and businessman 'Prince' Heinrich XIII. AP

In what has been described as one of the largest ever counter-terrorist operations in Germany, on the morning of December 7, the police raided 130 properties across 11 states and arrested 25 individuals of a far-right group on charges of plotting to violently overthrow the German state. The group, which consisted of members of a shadowy far-right movement known as Reichsbuerger ('Citizens of the Reich') had even set up a 'council' to take over. Some members of the group were also planning to force their way into the German Parliament.

Among the arrested suspects was aristocrat and businessman 'Prince' Heinrich XIII, from the erstwhile royal family, the House of Reuss, which had ruled over parts of eastern Germany in the past. While the Reuss family has distanced itself from Heinrich XIII, the plan apparently was to make him the monarch after the putsch. Also detained was Birgit Malsack-Winkemann, a former MP from the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party. Heinrich had reportedly reached out to Russia for support but there was no evidence that Russia had responded positively.

The Reichsbuerger movement has been on the radar of domestic security agencies for some time. Germany, with its Nazi past, has been particularly sensitive to rightwing extremism. That has, however, not prevented the rise of far-right movements or parties such as the AfD, which has representatives in German Parliament. The Reichsbuerger movement consists of splinter groups aligned along varying shades of disenchantment with the German state. Its core ideological belief is the illegitimacy of the German republic. . Many Reichsbuerger believe Germany is yet to fully free itself from Allied occupation post-World War-2, while others are convinced the country is actually a private corporation. Beyond this, the Reichsbuerger worldview turns into a cocktail of neo-Nazi, anti-Semitic views and assorted conspiracy theories.

It has been reported that many Reichsbuerger are strongly influenced by QAnon, an American far-right political movement. Just like the American far-right, the Reichsbuerger love guns and hate lockdowns. Some of them refuse to pay taxes, or pick up fights with government departments. Others design their own passports and identity documents to show allegiance to the Reich - as the German state was called until 1945, with the Nazi regime being the 'Third Reich'. They believe the Third Reich still exists and for it to reestablish itself officially, Germany, which is in the grip of a 'Deep State', must throw off its shackles.

Although the typical Reichsbuerger is likely to be a single, white, middle-aged, under-socialised male, members come from all walks of middle class life - businessmen, teachers, doctors and employees of federal security agencies. In fact, for the government, one of the most alarming aspects has been the involvement of serving members of the German special forces. As per a report in May, over 200 state security personnel had links to Reichsbuerger. The German magazine *Der Spiegel* reported that among the raided properties was the barrack of a special forces unit, KSK.

Officials estimate the overall strength of the Reichsbuerger at 21,000, with about 2,100 susceptible to using violent means to achieve their goals. While it is unlikely that they would have been able to carry through with their alleged plot against the German state, their very prevalence points to a troubling reality - the existence of a fertile base that an aspiring tyrant could exploit in the near future.

IMF holds talks about debt situation of Sri Lanka, Zambia

Reuters
WASHINGTON

International Monetary Fund chief Kristlina Georgieva said she had a "fruitful exchange" with her Chinese counterparts this week on her repeated calls for accelerating debt treatments for countries like Zambia and Sri Lanka.

Ms. Georgieva, World Bank President David Malpass and other financial leaders met in person in China's Anhui province this week with officials from the People's Bank of China, China's Finance Ministry and its EXIM Bank and China Development Bank.

Ms. Georgieva said the discussions touched on the common framework for debt treatment set up in late 2020 by China, the U.S. and other Group of 20 major economies, as well as some specific cases of countries seeking debt relief.

Implementation of the common framework process has been halting, with only one country, Chad, having completed the debt treatment process, and its agreement not resulting in any actual reductions of the country's debt.

Zambia is pushing hard to finish its debt restructuring in the first quarter of 2023.

Disbursing funds

"We need to build on the momentum of the agreement on Chad's debt treatment and accelerate and finalise the debt treatments for Zambia and Sri Lanka, which would allow for disbursements from the IMF and multilateral development banks," Ms. Georgieva said in a statement.

Mr. Malpass, in his remarks at the meeting, said the discussions focused on the urgent need for more rapid progress on debt issues, adding, "Changes in China's positions are critical in this effort."

He welcomed support voiced by Premier Li Keqiang for a "systematic engagement on debt" during the meetings, and underscored the need for transparent disclosure of China's loan contracts, and removal of non-disclosure clauses and hidden collateral arrangements.

European Parliament vice-president arrested over graft charges linked to Qatar

Agence France-Presse
BRUSSELS

The Belgian police arrested Greek socialist MEP Eva Kaili, one of the vice-presidents of the European Parliament, in Brussels on Friday evening, a source close to the case told AFP.

The arrest, in connection with an investigation into corruption implicating the hosts of the ongoing World Cup Qatar, follows the detention of four other suspects earlier on Friday, the source said.

Ms. Kaili, who is the partner of one of the four people arrested earlier, has been detained for questioning by the police, the source added.

Belgium's federal prosecutor announced the earlier arrests after 600,000 euros in cash was discovered when police raided 16 addresses raids in the capital Brussels.

The prosecutors did not specify the identities of the suspects or name the country involved, saying only that it was a "Gulf" state.

But a source close to the case confirmed press reports that it was focused on suspected attempts by Qatar to corrupt an Italian Socialist who was a member of the European parliament from 2004 to 2019.

The arrest called for the bloc's MPs to be held to higher standards.

"This is not an isolated incident," said anti-corruption campaigning group Transparency International.

"While this may be the most egregious case of alleged corruption the European Parliament has seen in many years, it is not an isolated incident," a statement from its director Michiel van Hulten said.

SBI
STATE BANK OF INDIA
LOCAL HEAD OFFICE, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, KERALA- 695012.

TENDER NOTICE FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION AND SELECTION OF PROJECT ARCHITECT FOR PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF MULTISTORIED RESIDENTIAL BUILDING ON BANK'S PLOT-2 AT PALARIVATTOM, ERNAKULAM

State Bank of India invites tenders in two cover system (Technical and Price bid) for prequalification and selection of Principal Project Architect cum Project Management Consultant (PPA cum PMC) for the proposed construction of residential quarters on Bank's Plot-2 at Palarivattom, Ernakulam. The prequalification criteria, scope of the services to be offered, terms and conditions of appointment and the detailed proforma etc. for submission of tenders (Technical and Price Bid) for the purpose can be downloaded from our website **https://sbi.co.in/web/sbi-in-the-news/procurement-news.** The last date for submission of duly filled in tenders in the prescribed format at this office will be up to **3:00 p.m** on **10.01.2023**.

Thiruvananthapuram
11.12.2022
Assistant General Manager (P&E)

AJMER VIDYUT VITRAN NIGAM LIMITED
Corporate Identification Number (CIN) – U40109RJ2000SGC016482
Registerd Office: Vidyut Bhawan, Panchsheel Nagar, Makarwali Road, Ajmer-305004
Office of The Superintending Engineer (IT) IT Center, Opp. 220KV GSS,
Naka Madar, Ajmer Phone/Fax : 0145-2671860 ; e-mail : seitajm.avvnl@rajasthan.gov.in;
Website – http://energy.rajasthan.gov.in/avvnl

E-Tender Notice - AVVNL/SE/IT/TN-IT-56

E- Bids are invited (Single Stage Two-Envelope Bidding Process with e-Procurement) from eligible Bidders in two parts (Technical and Financial Proposal) for Request for Proposal for **"Smart Customer Care Centre with Fault Rectification Team (FRT) on SAAS (System As A Service) Basis in Ajmer Discom"** against Tender No. TN-IT-56 against Open e-Tender No. AVVNL/SE/IT/TN-IT-56. All the details regarding tenders are available at our website **http://energy.rajasthan.gov.in/avvnl**, **https://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in** and **https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in**. In future corrigendum/extension etc. if any, shall be published only at website **http://energy.rajasthan.gov.in/avvnl**, **https://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in** and **https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in**. **UBN No. : AVV2223SLOB00556**
Raj.Samwad/C/22/11481
Superintending Engineer (IT)

ODISHA JOINT ENTRANCE EXAMINATION-2022
(OJEE-2022)

No: OJEE / 614 Date: 10.12.2022

NOTICE REGARDING SPOT ROUND COUNSELLING FOR ADMISSION IN MBBS/BDS COURSES FOR ACADEMIC SESSION, 2022-23

The Spot Counselling for admission to vacant seats of MBBS/BDS courses for the academic session 2022-23 is scheduled to be held at OJEE CELL, Gandamunda, Bhubaneswar on 13.12.2022.

MBBS/BDS candidates, who have been placed in the latest OJEE State Merit List, are eligible to participate. However, candidates, who have taken admission in any Institute through All India Counselling by MCC at the end of Mop-Up Round or through OJEE Counselling at the end of 2nd Round (including upgradation), are not eligible to participate in the OJEE Spot Counselling.

For detailed schedule, vacant seat matrix and modalities, please visit **www.ojee.nic.in**.

Sd/-
Chairman, OJEE, Odisha

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU
Department of Agricultural Marketing and
Agri Business CIPET Road, Thiru. Vi. Ka. industrial Estate,
Guindy, Chennai-600 032. Phone: 044-22253885
email: agrimarketing.aif@gmail.com

Reference No:MCS3/34898/2022

On behalf of Governor of Tamil Nadu, Director of Agricultural Marketing and Agri Business invites applications from eligible and interested candidates for the following posts **on contract basis for 4 years** renewable annually based on performance to work in the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) State Project Management Unit (SPMU) at Department of Agricultural Marketing and Agri Business, Head Quarters, Chennai -32.

S.NO	Name of the post	No. of Post
1.	Project Management Consultant	1
2.	MIS Executive	1
3.	Executive Assistant (Accounts)	1
4.	Tele Caller	1
5.	Data Entry Operator	1
6.	District Level Consultant	37 nos.(1 for each District)

The details such as eligibility, experience and selection procedures can be seen in the website www.tender.tn.gov.in

DIPR /1258/ DISPLAY / 2022
"சோதனை கடந்து சாதித்தோம், சாதனை புரிந்து சரித்திரம் படைப்போம்"
Director
Agricultural Marketing and Agri Business

Lending a helping hand to eliminate TB as *Ni-kshay Mitra*

Vinod K. Paul

Public health experience has shown that undernutrition and TB form a vicious cycle. Poor nutritional status predisposes an individual to get infected by the disease, or have a dormant disease manifest clinically. TB leads to depletion of nutrient reserves and aggravation of undernutrition.

Optimum nutritional support to TB patients improves weight gain, adherence to therapy, muscle strength, quality of life, robust recovery and reduced mortality. Good nutrition also prevents relapse of the disease.

Direct cash benefits

With a sharper focus on the nutritional improvement among TB patients, the Union Health Ministry launched the Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana in 2018 as part of National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP) which provides direct cash benefit transfer of ₹500 per month to TB patients on treatment.

Large-scale country-wide health programmes such as smallpox and polio eradication became a success only through *jan bhagidari* (people's participation). Community participation plays a key role in mass awareness, behaviour change, demand creation, clearing myths and convincing the reluctant to embrace services. The success of these health programmes reinforced our belief that a further augmentation of multi-sectoral approach involving community and institutional-stakeholder support in TB elimination is required. This can play a pivotal role in addressing the social and nutritional determinants, thereby contributing toward the attainment of national goal.

Jan bhagidari forms the core principle of the recently launched Pradhan Mantri TB Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan to provide additional support to TB patients.

The Ni-kshay mitras

Under this, *Ni-kshay Mitras* can adopt and care for TB patients. *Ni-kshay Mitras* are volunteers who could be individuals, NGOs, co-operative societies, corporates, and even political parties.

They commit to help the TB patients through nutritional support, nutritional supplements, additional investigations and vocational support.

This public health initiative has already shown good uptake. Within three months of its launch, more than 52,000 *Ni-kshay Mitras* have registered.

Helping a TB patient could avert ruinous downslide of a family due to wage loss. Humanitarian support from people could save the life of a TB patient. *(Vinod K. Paul is Member (Health), NITI Aayog and a Ni-kshay Mitra. Views expressed are personal)*

Is anaemia seen in 3 in 10 rural men due to iron deficiency?

Prevalence of anaemia among men in rural areas was lowest in the southern States (18.5%) and highest in the eastern region (34.1%)

R. Prasad

While anaemia among adolescent girls and boys, and women, particularly those of reproductive age has been studied extensively, anaemia in men has been largely ignored. In 2019, a paper published in *The Lancet Global Health* highlighted that nearly one in four men (23.2%) in the age group 15-54 years in India were anaemic (mild, moderate, or severe). The conclusion was based on the analysis of over 1,06,000 men from the fourth round of the National Family Health Survey carried out from January 2015 to December 2016.

Men are considered to have anaemia if haemoglobin concentration is less than 13.0 g/dL. While iron deficiency is the main cause of anaemia, particularly in women, other causes of anaemia are deficiency in folate, vitamin B12, or vitamin A.

Prevalence of anaemia

Now, a recent analysis of the fifth National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) has shed light on anaemia among men living in rural areas. The study, published in *PLOS Global Public Health*, analysed the data of over 61,000 men aged between 15-54 years. It found that three out of ten men in rural areas were anaemic; prevalence of anaemia was more in rural areas than in urban areas – one of five urban men are anaemic, while three out of every ten rural men are anaemic. Prevalence of anaemia was found to be higher (34.7%) among men who were underweight compared with men who were overweight (19.3%). Men who consumed alcohol and smoked had "slightly higher" occurrences of anaemia, and older men were found to be more vulnerable.

Men in the southern States had lower anaemia prevalence (18.5%), while prevalence was highest in the eastern region (34.1%). Anaemia prevalence was 27.2% in the north region, 28.9% in west, 26.9% in northwest and 25% in the central region.

Like the 2019 study, the authors of the latest paper stress that "the findings suggest the need to recognise anaemia among men as a public health issue".

However, the latest study does not categorically state that anaemia in rural men is due to iron deficiency. "We were not able to classify the type of anaemia as the NFHS-5 data had only haemoglobin concentration," says Sumit Ram, Junior Research Fellow at the Department of Geography, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, and the corresponding author of the paper. "But previous studies have found that nearly 60% of anaemia in children and women of reproductive age is due to iron deficiency."

However, Dr. Anura Kurpad, Professor of Physiology at St John's Medical College, Bengaluru is not sure if anaemia in men is due to iron deficiency. "The problem is assigning a cause for anaemia among men. It is not so likely to be iron deficiency as men do not lose iron every month through menstruation. In fact, men do not lose iron unless they are bleeding from somewhere, or have some abnormal haemoglobin like thalassemia or sickle cell anaemia," he says.

Iron deficiency

Dr. Kurpad draws a parallel with anaemia in children where iron deficiency was not the main cause in many children. "The Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey data also showed that in children, only one-third of the anaemia could be solely ascribed to iron deficiency. Another one-third were mixed B vitamin deficiency, and the remaining one-third were 'unknown causes' (*The Lancet Child Adolescent Health*, July 2020)," says Dr. Kurpad.

Despite not being sure if iron deficiency is indeed responsible for anaemia in rural men, the authors of the latest study write: "The benefits of existing programmes and policies related to anaemia eradication should be extended to men as well. In addition, targeted interventions among susceptible groups of rural men are advised as a way to reduce the prevalence of anaemia."

Mr. Ram clarified why the authors recommended iron supplementation in men: "Since over 60% of anaemia overall is due to iron deficiency, we think that it might perhaps be useful to provide iron supplementation for men as well to address anaemia."

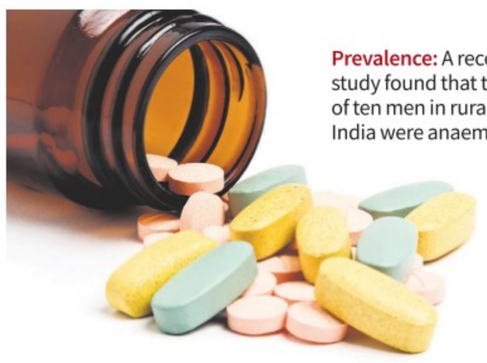
Dr. Kurpad cautions about providing iron supplementation for men to tackle anaemia without knowing the cause.

Another factor that might have overestimated the prevalence of anaemia in rural men is the use of capillary blood samples to measure haemoglobin.

"Capillary blood samples inflate anaemia prevalence by as much as 33% to 50% in women. No reason why the same may not be happening in men," Dr. Kurpad cautions. "So, at this stage, we need to be cautious: increase the diversity of foods to improve iron and vitamin intake in men, without chemicals. Evaluate for the actual cause, before taking any big step."

Is iron supplementation needed for rural men?

Men are considered to have anaemia if haemoglobin concentration is less than 13.0 g/dL



Prevalence: A recent study found that three out of ten men in rural areas in India were anaemic.

- While iron deficiency is the main cause of anaemia, particularly in women, other causes of anaemia are deficiency in folate, vitamin B12, or vitamin A
- **The latest study does not categorically state that anaemia in rural men is due to iron deficiency as only haemoglobin concentration data were available**
- Anaemia in men may not be due to iron deficiency as men do not lose iron every month through menstruation
- **Men do not lose iron unless they are bleeding from somewhere, or have some abnormal haemoglobin like thalassemia or sickle cell anaemia**
- Capillary blood samples were used for measuring haemoglobin. This can overestimate anaemia prevalence by as much as 33% to 50% in women, which may be the case in men too
- **Providing iron supplementation for men to tackle anaemia without knowing the cause may not be prudent**
- The focus should be on increasing the diversity of foods to improve iron and vitamin intake in men, without relying on iron supplementation

Those fascinating hornbills

SPEAKING OF SCIENCE

D. Balasubramanian

The logo for India's upcoming G20 presidency was officially unveiled recently at the Hornbill festival in Nagaland. This popular festival showcases the art, culture and cuisine of Nagaland. It also brings attention to a family of some of the largest, most magnificent birds in our country.

The Great Hornbill is found in the Himalayan foothills, the Northeast and the Western Ghats. It is the state bird of Arunachal Pradesh and Kerala. With a wingspan of five feet, it presents an awesome (and noisy) spectacle while landing on a perch. The wreathed hornbill, the brown hornbill and the rufous-necked hornbill are slightly smaller, and only found in Northeast India. A great place to spot the oriental pied hornbill is the Rajaji National Park, Uttarakhand. The Malabar grey hornbill's loud 'laugh' echoes in the Western Ghats. The smallest of the group, the Indian grey hornbill is found all over (except the Thar Desert), and is often spotted in urban settings such as Theosophical Society gardens in Chennai.

Their large, heavy beaks pose some limitations – for balance, the first two vertebrae are fused. Hornbills can move their heads as in 'yes', but have difficulty in saying 'no'. Large beaks are also seen in toucans from Central and South America – an example of convergent evolution – as both birds have the same feeding ecology.

Tall trees preferred

Hornbills prefer tall trees for their nests (breast height being 1.5 metres or more). There is a mutualism between these birds and the trees where they nest. As large fruit-eating birds, hornbills play a vital role in dispersing the seeds of about 80 rainforest trees. Some trees, such as the cup-calyx white cedar suffer a 90% decline in seed dispersal beyond the parent tree when hornbill populations decline, negatively impacting the biodiversity of forests.

Preferred habitat: Natural-growth rainforest are most suited for hornbill populations. GETTY IMAGES

The towering Tualang tree of Southeast Asia is so entwined in folklore that it is considered a taboo to fell this tree. It is the preferred habitat of the helmeted hornbill. The fruiting season coincides with the birds' reproductive cycle. Traditional ecological knowledge stresses the value of hornbills in dispersing the seeds, which are expectorated from the throats of the birds. "When the seeds sprout, the hornbills hatch", a saying goes.

Prone to hunting

Unfortunately, tall trees are the first targets of illegal logging, and so there has been a slow decline in hornbill numbers, as reflected in bird counts. Slow, because these birds are long lived (up to 40 years). Their large size makes them prone to being hunted. The helmeted hornbill of Sumatra and Borneo is critically endangered because its helmet-like casque (a horny outgrowth over the skull), called red ivory, is highly prized. Luckily, the casque of the Great Hornbill is not suitable for carving.

Hornbill populations appear to be faring better in South India, The Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysuru, has collected data to show that forest plantations are not as suited for hornbill populations as natural-growth rainforest, although nests are sometimes built in non-native silver oaks.

The adaptable nature of hornbills is also seen in their feeding on the fruits of the African Umbrella tree, which has been introduced as a shade tree in our coffee plantations.

(The article was written in collaboration with Sushil Chandani who works in molecular modelling. sushilchandani@gmail.com)

SNAPSHOTS

Oldest-ever DNA sample provides proof of mastodon

Two-million-year-old DNA sequences – the oldest ever obtained – recovered from a 100-metre-thick deposit of frozen mud and sand in the Northeastern tip of Greenland, shattering the record for ancient-DNA preservation, suggest that the region was once home to mastodons and reindeer that roamed a forested ecosystem unlike any now found on Earth. Reindeers were also unheard of in Greenland, suggesting that the DNA could reveal much about ecosystems that were not recorded in the fossil record.

ESA developing batteries to help power space stations

Nuclear waste could power space missions to the far reaches of the Solar System – places that are too dark for solar panels. Scientists are developing batteries containing americium-241, a radioactive isotope that can be extracted from power plants' spent fuel. Americium-241, a by-product of plutonium decay, has never been used as a fuel. The project is funded by the European Space Agency (ESA), which hopes to wean itself off plutonium-powered equipment sourced from international partners.

Short bursts of physical activity may reduce death risk

Short, vigorous bursts of physical activity one or two minutes in length, occurring as part of daily life – such as very fast walking – are associated with a substantially decreased risk of dying (*Nature Medicine*). This decreased risk was quantitatively similar to the effects of vigorous physical activity in leisure-time exercise. The growing availability of physical activity data from wearable devices has made it possible to assess health consequences of short bursts of activity.

Question Corner

Toughest material

Which is the toughest material ever developed?

Scientists have measured the highest toughness ever recorded of any material while investigating a metallic alloy made of chromium, cobalt, and nickel. Not only is the metal exceptionally strong and ductile – which, in materials science, means highly malleable and impressively strong – its strength and ductility improves as it gets colder. This runs counter to most other materials in existence.

CrCoNi is a subset of a class of metals called high entropy alloys (HEAs). All the alloys in use today contain a high proportion of one element with lower amounts of additional elements added, but HEAs are made of an equal mix of each constituent element. These balanced atomic recipes bestow some of these materials with an extraordinarily high combination of strength and ductility when stressed, which together make up what is termed "toughness". The toughness of this material near liquid helium temperatures (20 kelvin, -424 Fahrenheit) is as high as 500 megapascals square root metres.

Readers may send their questions / answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in

FAQ

Will new Alzheimer's drug work?

How have patients with early onset of the disease responded in recent clinical trials to lecanemab, developed by two pharma companies? How does the new drug work? According to *The Lancet*, what are the apprehensions around the new medicine?

Ramya Kannan

GETTY IMAGES

The story so far:

In late November, news of the success of a drug to reduce cognitive decline in patients with Alzheimer's disease burst on the horizon with all the promise of being a silver bullet. The drug, lecanemab, jointly developed by pharma companies Biogen and Eisai, was tested on patients with early Alzheimer's. Results of the study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM) showed modest effects in arresting decline of cognitive and functional aspects in patients with early disease. This has sparked hope in a world where an estimated 55 million people live with the debilitating effects of Alzheimer's disease.

What is lecanemab?

Lecanemab belongs to a class of drugs called monoclonal antibodies. These antibody-mediated drugs target beta amyloid, the protein deposition that is seen in patients with Alzheimer's disease, and disrupts cells function. Neuropsychiatrist Ennapadam. S. Krishnamoorthy, founder, Buddhi Clinic, Chennai, says: "For years amyloid plaques have thought to be an important target for treatment in Alzheimer's. This class of drugs does precisely that."

As per the NEJM paper, the clinical phase-3 trial involved persons 50 to 90 years of age with early Alzheimer's disease (mild cognitive impairment or mild dementia due to Alzheimer's disease) with evidence of amyloid deposition. Participants were randomly assigned intravenous lecanemab or placebo. It was observed that lecanemab "robustly removed the amyloid plaques." This was the primary end point of the trial, which showed a change in the score recorded at baseline when the trial began on the Clinical Dementia Rating-Sum of Boxes (CDR-SB). Key secondary end points included a change in amyloid burden on PET (positron-emission topography). There were changes both in the lecanemab group versus the placebo group, the researchers concluded.

Will lecanemab be able to treat Alzheimer's?

The Lancet, in an editorial, argues that a phase-3 trial showing efficacy on clinical outcomes, particularly after such a long and fruitless wait for a successful therapy for Alzheimer's disease, is welcome news. However, it points out that the difference noticed on the CDR-SB scale may not be clinically meaningful, going by metrics indicated in previous studies. Also, the development of amyloid-related imaging abnormalities (ARIA) in one of five patients was a cause for concern. The editorial concludes that given these concerns, "whether lecanemab is the game changer that some have suggested remains to be seen... however, the immediate impact of lecanemab should not be overstated."

Dr. Krishnamoorthy said the first of the drugs for Alzheimer's – aducanumab – was approved in fast-track mode, to much criticism. "Many experts were unhappy with the trial results that led to its approval. Apart from the questionably small differences between the trial and placebo groups, a concern was expressed also about serious side effects like haemorrhages in the brain and oedema (brain swelling)." Lecanemab, he adds, on the other hand, appears to have shown modest effects in early dementia both via clinical improvements and reduction in amyloid plaques. "The same problems of brain swelling and haemorrhages may exist with this drug as well, and may be true for many antibody-mediated treatments," he explains. For practitioners like him, this is an opportunity to be 'cautiously optimistic'. "This is definitely a step forward and offers hope with the following caveats, including eligibility criteria, intensity of treatment, need for imaging and high costs." Only those in the early course of the disease are likely to benefit. It has to be delivered via weekly IV injections requiring hospital visits and close monitoring and in order to identify amyloid deposits, an amyloid PET, which is not available in many countries in the developing world, is required. The cost, as *The Lancet* speculates, is likely to be prohibitive for low-income and middle-income countries where most people with dementia live.

What is the future?

An initial decision on the drug's approval by the FDA is expected by January 6, 2023, and from the European Medicines Agency later in 2023, according to *The Lancet*.

Why a price cap on Russian oil?

Why did the Group of Seven nations feel this step was necessary? How has Russia reacted to the move? Where does India stand on imports of Russian oil, considering that Russia is now the top supplier to the country?

K. Bharat Kumar

Black gold: The Shun Tai crude oil tanker anchored at the Kozmino terminal near Nakhodka, Russia on December 4. REUTERS

The story so far:

After months of negotiation, western countries comprising the Group of Seven nations, the European Union and Australia, agreed to a price ceiling of $60 per barrel of seaborne Russian Urals crude oil that came into force just as sanctions against freighters carrying Russian crude oil took effect earlier this week.

Why did the West want a price cap?

Western nations, led by the G-7, want to punish Russia for having invaded Ukraine and rein in the profits accruing to Russia from oil exports. But they also want to keep some oil from Russia flowing globally so that supply is not significantly affected, which could push up energy prices. With a recession in parts of the western world already a possibility, oil price spikes would only hasten the spiral into economic contraction.

So western nations came up with the concept of a price cap, above which accessorial services such as ship insurance, vessel clearances and the like would not be available to freighters carrying Russian oil. About 95% of global insurance for freighters by tonnage comes from European countries, especially the United Kingdom.

Without such services, Russia would find it difficult to sell its crude above the price cap.

The West had hoped that with a price cap of $60 per barrel on its main grade, the Urals crude, Russia would still see incentive, even with lesser profit, to keep pumping out oil for global consumption.

How has Russia responded?

Russia had first said the price cap might only impact its output minimally. Later, it also spoke about considering a ban on export to countries that insisted on the price cap. Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak has been quoted by the Russian media as saying that a mechanism was being worked out and that the ban on oil export to such countries would take effect before the year closed.

Russian news agency *Interfax* quoted Mr. Novak as saying, "Global consumption, economic growth in the world must be provided with energy resources. There is not much oil in the world, and Russian oil has always been and will be in demand. Yes, supply chains will change. Nevertheless, we do not see any tragedy in this."

Russia is also said to be considering a floor price in retaliation to the price cap, as another option. A floor price would aim to ensure that it did not sell below that level. This tug of war would theoretically put Russian oil buyers, who want European insurance and other services to continue, in a bind.

How has Russia's oil output been this year?

Between January and November, Russia's production rose 2% to about 488 million tonnes, as per global media reports. China and India are popular examples of countries that bought discounted oil. But the likes of France and major oil producer Saudi Arabia too purchased oil from Russia. Saudi used the discounted price to buy oil to run its power plants, while selling its own costlier variant to the world.

Recently, India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar cited the European Union's oil imports from Russia as being six times as much as India's between February 24 and November 17.

How much oil does India import from Russia?

Interestingly, India – whose imports of Russian oil was only about 0.2% of total oil imports in the year ended March 2022 – has had Russia serve as its top oil supplier in October and November. *Reuters* reported that in November, India bought 53% – or about 3.7 million tonnes – of all the seaborne Urals crude that Russia exported.

How are global oil prices behaving?

As per oilprice.com, Urals crude touched about $53, compared with about $73 to a barrel on November 8. Oil prices are reacting to different global pulls. Earlier in the week, they settled after dipping below their lows since January as there was hope that China would ease restrictions in response to protests and hence help spur demand. On the other hand, ships carrying Kazakh oil have been piling up for passage through Turkish ports. Turkey has been insisting on proof of insurance from freighters, which takes time to verify, leading to long queues.

PROFILES

Battle for a lost republic

National Resistance Front

Despite scant international support, Ahmad Massoud's anti-Taliban grouping hopes to reach out to the younger generation that grew up during the 20 non-Taliban years

Suhasini Haidar

ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

For years, Afghanistan has been haunted by a single question: What if Ahmad Shah Massoud had not been killed when he was, just two months before the Taliban fell in 2001? Had Massoud not been killed in a suicide bombing by Al Qaeda terrorists pretending to be journalists, he could well have been the guiding force of Afghanistan post-Taliban then, and perhaps the Taliban would not have been able to regroup, many say.

Today, it is Massoud's son, 33-year old Ahmad Massoud, who is making a bid to form the "Second Resistance" with the "National Resistance Force" he set up last year along with former Vice-President Amrullah Saleh to fight the Taliban that is once again in power in Kabul. Just a child when his father was killed, the young Massoud has grown up in relative comfort, mostly abroad, studying first in Iran and then in the U.K. As Afghanistan's traditional, political non-Taliban leaders scattered around the world begin to organise themselves, the young Massoud pitches to a younger, more urban demographic, who grew up during 20 non-Taliban years with green-shoots of economic progress and democracy, rather than the traditional Afghanistan of warlords and religious conservatism.

However, unlike his father, who received support from India, the U.K., France and other countries, Massoud Junior receives practically no international assistance today. In a conflict-weary world, there is little financial support for armed groups anywhere, and given the NATO and the U.S.'s recent, humiliating pull-out from Afghanistan, less appetite for a plan that involves any military support. As head of foreign relations at NRF, Ali Maisam Nazary is fighting the battle against apathy and indifference in a number of international capitals. In recent months, the NRF has been instrumental in bringing together various parts of the Afghan diaspora at conferences and gatherings in Turkey and Vienna.

"The perception that we are fighting a civil war is incorrect. NRF is continuing the Global War on Terror [that the international community gave up] – not just against the Taliban but 21 international terror groups in Afghanistan today," says Mr. Nazary, calling the NRF's fight one for "global and regional security", not just for "peace and justice" in Afghanistan.

"At present there is little hope for the NRF, because they lack support from outside and don't have power inside the country," says former diplomat B.R. Muthukumar, who as India's Ambassador to Tajikistan, had been responsible for channelling support to the Northern Alliance. "They are living on the legend of Ahmad Shah Massoud but they are not the Northern Alliance of Massoud Senior," he` explains. Many experts also point to the presence of Pakistan, much stronger than last time on the ground in Afghanistan that will make it harder for anti-Taliban forces to prevail.

The NRF faces other unfavourable comparisons to the Northern Alliance, whose fighters had won the battle against a superpower, driving Soviet forces out of Afghanistan. The NRF is made up of those who are either too old to fight a well-equipped Taliban, or too young to have been trained in guerilla warfare, or to understand Afghan traditions fully. Afghanistan is a land made up of many minorities – 42% Pashtuns, 27% Tajiks, 10% Hazaras, 9% Uzbeks. In order to control the whole, the NRF, whose fighters are mostly of Tajik ethnicity, will need to reach out to more than its support base and convince the new generation of Afghans to join their cause.

The NRF also faces a stronger opponent. In 1996, only Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE recognised the Taliban regime. While no country recognises the Taliban regime today, more than a dozen, including India, maintain diplomatic missions in Kabul, send officials to Kabul to hold talks with the Taliban's ministers, and treat them like a government for all practical purposes.

The NRF hopes to fight this Taliban through a vision of establishing a federal, "decentralised, democratic republic", in the hope that Afghans who had participated in elections since 2005 and had seen the inclusion of girls in school and women in the workforce, would not submit endlessly to the Taliban's depredations and authoritarian rule. "They may have geography and power today, but we have legitimacy that comes from popular support," he adds – an assertion that has yet to be proven and will be tested in the months to come.

An MP to watch in Sri Lanka

Shanakiyan Rasamanickam

The Opposition legislator, who frequently raises local, regional, and national issues, recently made heads turn with his remarks against China

Meera Srinivasan

ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH R. KUMAR

In the two years since he was first elected to Parliament, Sri Lankan legislator Shanakiyan Rasamanickam has won many fans within Sri Lanka, including from the Sinhalese majority. But his recent speech in Parliament, threatening to launch a "China go home" campaign, similar to the "Gota go home" people's movement that dislodged the former President, made more heads turn.

China was "forcing down" useless investments in Sri Lanka, China has "no democracy, no human rights," he roared in the House. If China is truly a friend of Sri Lanka, it must restructure the bankrupt island's debt and help the crisis-hit country access IMF support, the 32-year-old Opposition MP argued.

Dissenting voice

A popular dissenting Tamil voice on the island, Mr. Rasamanickam had an unlikely start to his political career. He began working as a political activist in his twenties in one of Sri Lanka's main national parties, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party [SLFP]. This was after the Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi [ITAK], the chief party of the Tamils in the north and east, where the young political aspirant first sought membership, refused to take him in. This, despite his grandfather S.M. Rasamanickam, after whom the legislator is named, having been an ITAK veteran and party president.

Following his childhood and schooling years in the central Kandy district, Mr. Rasamanickam pursued higher studies in Australia, reading commerce and accountancy to practise as a professional auditor. It was during a visit to his home country in 2013, to mark his grandfather's centenary, that the youngster considered getting into politics.

With SLFP Leader and former president Mahinda Rajapaksa readily welcoming him, Mr. Rasamanickam spent about four years in the predominantly Sinhala-Buddhist ruling party, whose policies Tamils were continuing to resist after the civil war. He worked as its chief electoral organiser in the eastern Batticaloa district. He contested the 2015 general elections from the party and lost. Disillusioned with the SLFP's ways, he resigned in 2018 and joined the ITAK, that was by then more open to him, after its long timers suffered electoral setbacks in the district. The ITAK is the chief constituent of the Tamil National Alliance [TNA], the main grouping representing Tamils of the north and east, with 10 seats in Sri Lanka's 225-member legislature. Even as the Alliance lost six seats in the 2020 general elections, Mr. Rasamanickam secured an impressive win, emerging second in the district's preferential list.

He didn't take long to make a mark. In December 2020, months into his parliamentary debut, Mr. Rasamanickam highlighted three issues in the House. He spoke on the deadly riot in the Mahara prison on the outskirts of Colombo, that left 11 inmates dead, the right of Tamils to remember their dead, and the right of Muslims to bury their relatives who had succumbed to COVID-19.

At the heart of these issues were policies, evidently repressive and racist, of the then Gotabaya Rajapaksa administration. In raising them, Mr. Rasamanickam spoke to the anger and grief of the Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims in one breath - something that Tamil legislators, focused mostly on Tamil concerns, seldom do. He consistently made a case for Muslims' burial rights, winning substantial support from the community in his district and across the island, again rare given tensions between Tamils and Muslims, even as he flagged land grabs of Tamils by the military and state, and national corruption amid early signs of economic collapse. In that he covered the local, regional, and national.

Anti-govt. march

In 2021, he was among those who led an impressive anti-government march called the 'Pothuvil to Polikandy' rally or 'P2P', from the eastern Ampara district to Jaffna in the Northern Province. The march highlighted key concerns not only of the war-affected Tamils, but also those of the Muslim community and Malaiyaha [Hill Country] Tamils.

Unlike his colleagues, he is comfortably trilingual in Sinhala, Tamil and English. He not only speaks to the concerns of the Sinhala majority but also does so in their own language. Usually dressed in a suit, Mr. Rasamanickam sticks to a yellow tie, apparently for branding. He has an active and astute social media team that amplifies his work with timely messaging. A politician to watch in Sri Lanka.

INBRIEF

Belgium to tax private jets, older planes to cut pollution

Belgium will impose new taxes on older, noisier planes as well as private jets and short-haul flights to reduce noise and air pollution, as per a a government statement. Currently, aircraft using Brussels Airport have to pay a tax determined by the noise level generated at take-off and landing. The new system, to take effect from April 1, 2023, makes taxes dependent not just on noise, but also on levels of air polluting and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as destination. REUTERS

NTPC commissions 162 MW solar capacity in Tamil Nadu

State-run power giant NTPC on Saturday said it has commissioned 162.27 MW of solar power capacity at Ettayapuram in Tamil Nadu. "Consequent upon successful commissioning, first part capacity of 162.27 MW out of 230 MW Ettayapuram Solar PV Project at Tamil Nadu, is declared on commercial operation w.e.f. 12:00 hrs. of 10.12.2022," it said in a BSE filing. With this, the standalone installed and commercial capacity of NTPC has reached 57,801.27 MW. PTI

MFs want to manage pension, provident, insurance funds

The aim of doubling assets under management to ₹80 lakh crore can be met earlier than 2027, if the mutual fund (MF) sector is allowed to manage pension, provident and insurance funds, an official said. "We want the government to allow the mutual fund industry to manage funds of pension, provident and insurance firms. This will help the industry ensure greater efficiency in managing resources in a cost-effective manner," AMFI chief executive N. S. Venkatesh said. PTI

'Centre to review situation in March before deciding on the announcement of new FTP'

Government is keen on framing a foreign trade policy that is 'more stable, more long term' and not one that would be forced to tackle volatility, says Director General of Foreign Trade Sarangi; official expects Latin America, Africa and West Asian countries to help bolster export growth in 2023

The Hindu Bureau
COIMBATORE

The government will review the trade situation in March before deciding on the announcement of a new Foreign Trade Policy, Director General of Foreign Trade Santosh Kumar Sarangi said on Friday.

Attending a meeting organised by the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) in Tiruppur, Mr. Sarangi explained to mediapersons that the volatility in the global trade scenario and the Russia-Ukraine conflict had led the government and many industry bodies to take a view in September that it might not be the right time to announce a new Foreign Trade Policy. The Centre had therefore extended the existing policy till the end of March 2023.

The decision was to evaluate the evolving situation and calibrate a policy that would be 'more stable, more long term', rather than bringing out a policy that would be forced to tackle a highly volatile situation. Given that the volatility was, however, continuing, he said: "We are in the process of framing a new foreign trade policy... we will hold a review about the FTP 15-20 days before March 31. But notwithstanding that we are working on the contours of the [new] foreign trade policy."

Eyeing clarity
Centre ideally wants to unveil a new FTP once prevailing uncertainty recedes, signals Sarangi

- We will hold a review about the FTP 15-20 days before March 31, says DGFT
- Government had extended existing trade policy to March 31, 2023, in the wake of global volatility, conflict in Ukraine
- DGFT sees exports touching $450 billion this financial year

EPCG default cases

Asked about an amnesty for cases of default under the Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) scheme, he said negotiations were on with the Department of Revenue to finalise the contours of the scheme. There had been extensive discussions with the industry too. "We have agreed upon the broad contours with the Department of Revenue." The amnesty scheme would be announced when the details were sorted out, he added.

Mr. Sarangi said exports were expected to touch $450 billion this fiscal. While 2023 was expected to be a challenging year, markets such as Latin America, Africa and West Asian countries were expected to see growth. India had signed an FTA with the UAE and was talking to other Gulf countries on the possibility for FTAs. On an FTA with the U.K., he said both nations had agreed to focus on quality.

China's central bank official calls for tighter regulation of green finance

Reuters
HONG KONG

China's central bank on Saturday warned that climate change and a global move to a low-carbon economy posed risks for domestic financial institutions and said stronger regulation was required.

"Climate change and low-carbon transformation will have a major impact on the wealth pattern and the asset management industry," Xuan Changneng, deputy governor of the People's Bank of China, told the Shanghai Bund Summit via video link. Loans to high-carbon industries account for a relatively high proportion of financial institutions' assets in China, the central banker said.

'Heightened risks'

Mr. Xuan added that an accelerated withdrawal or delayed exit from high-carbon sectors would result in heightened financial risks.

"Therefore, [we] should strengthen financial regulations, conduct stress tests and other means to guide financial institutions to continuously improve their green financial capabilities in accordance with the carbon peak and carbon neutral timetable."

China, the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitter, aims to cut its carbon dioxide emissions per unit of gross domestic product, or carbon intensity, by more than 65% from 2005 levels by 2030.

Mr. Xuan said globally the approach varies from voluntary participation to mandatory regulation and called on regulatory bodies to gradually implement mandatory, comprehensive and quantitative climate disclosure requirements.

He also warned of the potential reputational damage which financial institutions could suffer if they were suspected of overstating their green credentials citing the example of German asset management firm DWS Group.

A German consumer group in October sued DWS for allegedly misrepresenting a fund's green credentials in the marketing materials. DWS has repeatedly denied that it misled investors and has rejected the consumer group's allegations.

November thermal coal imports decline to 10 month-low

Reuters
KOLKATA

India's thermal coal imports fell to the lowest levels in 10 months during November, data from consultancy Coalmint showed, mainly due to a rise in domestic coal production.

The country imported 10.83 million tonnes of thermal coal in November, the Coalmint data showed, compared with 12.03 million tonnes in October and 9.45 million tonnes in November 2021. Imports fell mainly due to higher production by state-run Coal India, which accounts for 80% of India's coal output.

The world's largest coal miner has seen output increase by a sixth to 412.6 million tonnes during the first eight months of this financial year.

BMW Group India has lined up eight products for next year: Pawah

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

BMW Group India has introduced two luxury vehicles and a super sports bike in India.

This includes the new BMW M 340i X Drive sedan which would debut in India at ex-show room price of ₹69,20,000. While bookings have opened for the vehicle, deliveries are scheduled from January 2023, the company said.

"It is among the best-selling models of the BMW Group in India," said Vikram Pawah, president.

"We believe it (sales momentum) will carry on for sure. We got fantastic products coming next year as well," he added.

"We are starting with eight big launches with three being super big products, so I am very confident. We will grow in a very strong way in 2023 as well," Mr. Pawah added.

Powered up: Vikram Pawah, president BMW Group India, with the BMW XM electric sedan costing ₹2.6 crore. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"There were some economic challenges in terms of inflation and rising interest rates but those could be overcome with new products and the traction that is already there in the market," Mr. Pawah observed

On the current year, he said: "In the car division, if we look at both BMW and Mini brands, we are growing by around 40% year-on-year already (November-end).

BMW India had sold 10,405 cars in 2018, its best yearly sales performance till date.

Electric model

The automaker also introduced 'the first-ever' BMW XM which is the first electrified BMW M model.

With a range of 88 km, this vehicle is priced at ₹2.6 crore (ex-showroom). This model is scheduled for delivery from May next year.

The firm also unveiled the all-new BMW Motorrad S 1000 RR motorcycle in three variants in the price range of ₹20.25 lakh and ₹24.45 lakh. Deliveries will commence from February.

(With PTI inputs)

Russia's current account surplus more than doubles to $225.7 bn in January-November

Reuters
MOSCOW

Russia's current account surplus more than doubled to $225.7 billion in January-November from $108.6 billion in the same period last year, the central bank said.

This year, Russia is on track to post a record high current account surplus after its imports of goods and services fell due to Western sanctions while globally high commodity prices boosted the country's export revenues.

Exports rather than import compression are responsible for the majority of the rise, the Institute of International Finance said.

"A sharp reduction in the imports of goods in (the second) quarter (of) 2022 was replaced by their gradual recovery in the following months of the current year," the bank said. Imports are gradually recovering as Russia develops new markets and as an oil price cap and export embargo kick in, the surplus will likely decline in 2023.

Balancing act: Imports are slowly recovering. As oil price cap, export embargo kick in, the surplus may decline in 2023. REUTERS

Zydus Life gets U.S. FDA nod for two generic drugs

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Zydus Lifesciences said it has received approval from the U.S. FDA to market Silodosin capsules, used in treating benign prostatic hyperplasia, in America.

The firm also received final approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (U.S. FDA) to market Pregabalin capsules, indicated to treat pain caused by nerve damage, it said.

As per IQVIA data, Silodosin capsules and Pregabalin capsules had annual sales of $14 million and $242 million, respectively in the U.S. market.

BATTLING SPIRIT

Regragui ecstatic as Morocco 'writes history' at World Cup

Morocco coach Walid Regragui lauded the battling spirit of his injury-hit side after defeating Portugal 1-0 on Saturday. "We came up against a really great Portugal team. We still have guys injured. I told them before the match we had to write history for Africa. I'm very happy," Regragui said.

TEARFUL EXIT

Ronaldo departs with World Cup dream in tatters

Cristiano Ronaldo left the World Cup in tears on Saturday, walking off down the tunnel with his dreams of winning the trophy in tatters. "If you take two people that are the most upset perhaps it was Cristiano Ronaldo and myself," said Portugal coach Fernando Santos.

DIVINE GAZE

'Diego is watching us and pushing us from heaven'

Lionel Messi negotiated his fourth World Cup quarterfinal to move closer to the holy grail. "It was an impressive match and there's a little less weight on us. Diego [Maradona] is watching us and pushing us from heaven, and we hope it stays this way till the end."

NO GUARANTEE

Emotional Neymar hints he may not play for Brazil again

Neymar hinted he might quit international football, saying he could not "100 percent" guarantee he would play for the national team again. "I am not closing any doors on the national team but I am also not guaranteeing 100 percent that I will return," said an emotional Neymar.

SHOCKER

US scribe dies while covering Argentina-Netherlands match

Grant Wahl, 48, one of the most well-known football writers in USA, passed away on Saturday while covering the Argentina and Netherlands match. U.S. media seated near him said Wahl fell back in his seat in a section reserved for journalists during the game's extra time.

Morocco lays down a marker for Africa

En-Nesyri's towering header proves the difference in the quarterfinal against Portugal; goalkeeper Bounou comes up with another sterling show for the Atlas Lions; a disappointing curtain call for the 37-year-old Ronaldo on the world stage

FIFA WORLD CUP

Reuters
DOHA

Morocco wrote history on Saturday, becoming the first African and Arab country to reach the World Cup semifinals and continuing its surprise run with a shock 1-0 victory over the highly fancied Portugal.

Youssef En-Nesyri leapt high in the air to head home the game's only goal just before half-time at the Al-Thumama Stadium to strike a significant blow against football's established order and book a semifinal spot.

The result will be widely celebrated across Africa and the Arabic-speaking Middle East, desperate to see one of their teams in contention for the biggest prize in football.

Morocco had already taken the scalps of Belgium and Spain in this tournament but the win over Portugal was of greater significance.

It was also one of the Atlas Lions' better performances in Qatar, full of determined defending and canny counters, keeping at bay a collection of world stars despite losing key defender Nayef Aguerd to injury before the match and his back-four partner and captain Romain Saiss early in the second half.

Portugal would see it as a missed opportunity against the lowest-ranked side left in the tournament and a disappointing curtain call for the 37-year-old Cristiano Ronaldo.

Morocco, again noisily encouraged by the majority of the 44,198-strong crowd, said it was fatigued after the round of 16 success over Spain and immediately went into defensive mode as Portugal attacked from the outset.

A fourth-minute free kick for Portugal from wide on the right was swung into the penalty area and met by Joao Felix's diving header, producing a fine save from Yassine Bounou.

Drying up

But the supply quickly dried up thereafter as Morocco closed the passing lanes and frustrated the Portuguese attackers.

Felix had two more half chances in the opening session but Morocco gained in confidence and found a sudden spring in its step, frequently breaking on the counter attack.

Left-back Yahya Attiat-Allah made several surging runs down the flank, presenting Selim Amallah with a good chance in the 35th minute, but the latter was unable to convert.

But seven minutes later, a high ball from the full-back into the Portuguese box was met by a towering header from En-Nesyri, outjumping both goalkeeper Diogo Costa and defender Ruben Dias to hand Morocco the lead. Portuguese frustration was evident as they swarmed the Argentine referee Facundo Tello at the end of the first half, complaining that several penalty appeals had been turned down.

Heady stuff: En-Nesyri ensured that Morocco's fairytale run in Qatar continued. REUTERS

Morocco came close to a second goal four minutes into the second half as Jawad El Yamiq got a touch to Hakim Ziyech's in-swinging free kick but Costa was in place to block this time.

Ronaldo's record

Ronaldo's entry in the 51st minute was met with a loud chorus of jeers, but he did inject a new energy into the Portugal side. He equalled the men's international world record of 196 matches when he came on as a substitute in the second half. Ronaldo equalled the record set by Kuwait international Bader Al-Mutawa.

For Portugal, Goncalo Ramos, the hat-trick hero of the 6-1 win over Switzerland in the previous round, missed a header from close in the 58th.

Bruno Fernandes hit over the top of the crossbar five minutes later as Portugal threw more into attack and Morocco began to sit deeper. Bounou saved again from Felix with seven minutes left. Morocco's Walid Cheddira was sent off in stoppage time after receiving two yellow cards in quick succession. But his side, to the delight of the raucous support, held out for a famous triumph.

The result (quarterfinals):
Morocco 1 (En-Nesyri 42) bt Portugal 0.

Argentina battles past the Netherlands in slugfest

Ayon Sengupta
DOHA

This was back to bedlam. No longer a game of football, but a fractious brawl where you punched or got punched.

Louis van Gaal, the Dutch theoretician, had long forgotten the football philosophy he championed. And his salvation from a two-goal deficit was Wout Weghorst, a 6ft 6in bully to jostle the diminutive Argentines. His beast took this game to penalties, but Argentina, somehow, prevailed as Emiliano Martinez summoned his Copa America spirit to stop two penalties.

Spellbound

The opening goal again left you spellbound. Lionel Messi looks pudgy and scraggy but while the world thinks he is sleeping, he is observing and memorising every movement. His five seconds of enlightenment brought in a goal that no one could foresee.

Messi dribbled past two challenges and played a reverse pass that nutmegged Nathan Ake to reach Nahuel Molina inside the box. The experienced Virgil van Dijk, too, was left grasping air as Molina placed the ball past Andries Noppert.

Argentina's matches in Doha have been highly ritualistic with steady chanting like in a temple with sweaty bodies jostling to get a better view of their lord. And their lord's goal came after Denzel Dumfries was harshly penalised for a foul on Marcos Acuna. Facing his crazy dancing blue-and-white-clad disciples, Messi was not distracted, scooping it with power to the left of the 'keeper.

A glancing header from Weghorst soon made matters a little complex. Argentina was again hanging on to a one-goal lead with seven (+10) minutes to play.

Lautaro is gung-ho after netting the match-winner for Argentina

Lautaro Martinez

Penalty shootout

Netherlands		Argentina
Van Dijk	x	Messi
Berghuis	x	Paredes
Koopmeiners		Montiel
Weghorst	x	Enzo Fernandez
Luuk de Jong		Lautaro Martinez

Netherlands 2(3) lost to Argentina 2(4)

HOW IT PLAYED OUT

Regulation time

- **35th minute -** Molina strikes, courtesy a magical Messi assist
- **73rd minute -** Messi gets it right from the spot after Acuna is brought down inside the box by Dumfries
- **83rd minute -** Weghorst heads home a cross from Berghuis to keep the Dutch alive
- **90+10th minute -** Weghorst finishes a clever Koopmeiners free-kick to send the contest into extra-time

Extra-time

- No goals scored in both halves

Messi was down clutching his chest, cueing his team to waste as much time as possible.

He took time to crawl up from the next foul that he drew but Leandro Paredes got booked for a needless challenge on Ake. The Argentine then smacked the ball into an already aggrieved Dutch bench, which barged in to avenge and start one of the many skirmishes that was to be the norm for the next half hour of play. (Referee Antonio Mateu Lahoz flashed 18 yellow cards and a red, but the game was rarely in his control.)

Weghorst's equaliser came in the 11th minute of the 10 extra minutes added. A training ground move left Argentina befuddled as Teun Koopmeiners's shallow freekick reached Weghorst, who blasted it past Emi Martinez.

But amazing Emi was the hero to emerge from the spot-kicks. He dived to his right to stop Van Dijk, and Messi ambled up to take the next. He rolled his shot in and held up his arms in relief. A charged-up Emiliano dived the other way to save the next from Steven Berghuis, and Paredes made it 2-0 with a powerful finish. Koopmeiners notched the Netherlands' first with a bullet left footer, but Gonzalo Montiel converted to keep Argentina ahead. Weghorst didn't miss, but Enzo Fernandez, with a chance to close the game, hit wide to prolong the agony. Luuk de Jong was on target, and Lautaro Martinez, unperturbed by the pressure, scored and Argentina finally erupted.

Kishan slams the fastest ODI double hundred

Associated Press
CHATTOGRAM

Opener Ishan Kishan became the first batter to convert a maiden ODI century into a double hundred as India avoided a clean sweep with an emphatic 227-run victory over Bangladesh in the third and final match here on Saturday.

Kishan, who broke a number of records on his way to 210 off 131 balls, led India to a massive 409 for eight, its sixth 400-plus total in ODIs.

Bangladesh, which had never previously conceded 400-plus, was bowled out for 182 in 34 overs to suffer its second biggest defeat.

Kishan broke the record for the quickest double century, eclipsing Chris Gayle's 138-ball effort against Zimbabwe in the 2015 World Cup. "I'm blessed to hear my name alongside such legends. I still feel when I got out, 15 overs were left and I could've scored 300," said the 24-year-old Kishan, who also became the youngest batter to hit an ODI double century.

Virat Kohli struck a more serene 113 off 91 balls, bringing up his first ODI century since August 2019. It was his 44th ton in the format and 72nd overall as he went past Australian great Ricky Ponting in terms of international centuries.

Going great guns: Kishan smashed 24 fours and 10 sixes. AFP

Double hundreds by Indians in ODIs

					Deliveries and boundary count
264	Rohit Sharma	vs. Sri Lanka	Eden Gardens	2014	173b, 33x4, 9x6
219	Virender Sehwag	vs. West Indies	Indore	2011	149b, 25x4, 7x6
210	**Ishan Kishan**	**vs. Bangladesh**	**Chattogram**	**2022**	**131b, 24x4, 10x6**
209	Rohit Sharma	vs. Australia	Bengaluru	2013	158b, 12x4, 16x6
208*	Rohit Sharma	vs. Sri Lanka	Mohali	2017	153b, 13x4, 12x6
200*	Sachin Tendulkar	vs. South Africa	Gwalior	2010	147b, 25x4, 3x6

KISHAN'S double century off 126 balls is the quickest in men's ODIs, eclipsing Chris Gayle's 138-ball 200 for West Indies against Zimbabwe in 2015

KOHLI'S 72nd international hundred (27 in Tests, 44 in ODIs, 1 in T20Is) moved him past Australia's Ricky Ponting (71). Sachin Tendulkar (100 100s, 51 in Tests, 49 in ODIs) heads the list

SCOREBOARD

INDIA
Shikhar Dhawan lbw b Mehidy 3 *(8b)*, Ishan Kishan c Litton b Taskin 210 *(131b, 24x4, 10x6)*, Virat Kohli c Mehidy b Shakib 113 *(91b, 11x4, 2x6)*, Shreyas Iyer c Litton b Ebadot 3 *(6b)*, K.L. Rahul b Ebadot 8 *(10b, 1x4)*, Washington Sundar b Shakib 37 *(27b, 4x4, 1x6)*, Axar Patel b Taskin 20 *(17b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Shardul Thakur c Litton b Mustafizur 3 *(5b)*, Kuldeep Yadav (not out) 3 *(3b)*, Mohammed Siraj (not out) 0 *(2b)*; Extras (lb-5, w-4): 9; Total (for eight wkts. in 50 overs): 409.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-15 (Dhawan, 4.1 overs), 2-305 (Kishan, 35.5), 3-320 (Shreyas, 38.1), 4-344 (Rahul, 40.5), 5-344 (Kohli, 41.1), 6-390 (Axar, 47.2), 7-405 (Washington, 48.5), 8-409 (Shardul, 49.4).

BANGLADESH BOWLING
Mustafizur 10-0-66-1, Taskin 9-1-89-2, Mehidy 10-0-76-1, Ebadot 9-0-80-2, Shakib 10-0-68-2, Afif 1-0-14-0, Mahmudullah 1-0-11-0.

BANGLADESH
Anamul Haque c Siraj b Axar 8 *(7b, 1x6)*, Litton Das c Shardul b Siraj 29 *(26b, 4x4, 1x6)*, Shakib Al Hasan b Kuldeep 43 *(50b, 4x4)*, Mushfiqur Rahim b Axar 7 *(13b)*, Yasir Ali lbw b Umran 25 *(30b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Mahmudullah lbw b Washington 20 *(26b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Afif Hossain c Umran b Shardul 8 *(12b, 1x4)*, Mehidy Hasan Miraz c Siraj b Shardul 3 *(5b)*, Taskin Ahmed (not out) 17 *(16b, 2x6)*, Ebadot Hossain lbw b Shardul 0 *(3b)*, Mustafizur Rahman b Umran 13 *(17b, 2x4)*; Extras (b-4, lb-1, w-3, nb-1): 9; Total (in 34 overs): 182.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-33 (Anamul, 4.1), 2-47 (Litton, 7.3), 3-73 (Mushfiqur, 11.6), 4-107 (Yasir, 19.3), 5-124 (Shakib, 22.6), 6-143 (Mahmudullah, 26.5), 7-145 (Afif, 27.4), 8-148 (Mehidy, 29.1), 9-149 (Ebadot, 29.4).

INDIA BOWLING
Siraj 5-0-27-1, Shardul 5-0-30-3, Axar 5-0-22-2, Umran 8-0-43-2, Kuldeep 10-1-53-1, Washington 1-0-2-1.

Toss: Bangladesh.
MoM: Kishan; **MoS:** Mehidy.
India won third ODI by 227 runs, Bangladesh clinched series 2-1.
Next match: First Test: December 14-18, Chattogram, 9.30 a.m. IST.

INBRIEF

Duckett and Brook fifties swell England's lead

Harry Brook (74 batting) and Ben Duckett (79) took England to 202 for five, an overall lead of 281 runs, on day two after Pakistan had crumbled for 202 of the second Test in Multan.

The scores: England 281 & 202/5 in 49 overs (Ben Duckett 79, Harry Brook 74 batting, Ben Stokes 16 batting, Abrar Ahmed 3/81) vs Pakistan 202 in 62.5 overs (Babar Azam 75, Saud Shakeel 63, Jack Leach 4/98).

West Indies faces a monumental task

Australia set West Indies a monumental victory target of 497 and then reduced it to 38 for four on day three of the day-night second Test to be on the verge of a 2-0 series sweep on Saturday.

The scores: Australia 511/7 decl. & 199/6 decl.in in 31 overs (Usman Khawaja 45, Travis Head 38 n.o., Alzarri Joseph 3/33) vs West Indies 214 in 69.3 overs (Tagenarine Chanderpaul 47, Anderson Phillip, 43; Lyon 3/57) & 38/4 in 22 overs (Devon Thomas (batting) 8, Jason Holder (batting) 8, Scott Boland 3/9).

U Mumba signs off with a win over Bengaluru Bulls

U Mumba ended its Pro Kabaddi League Season 9 campaign with a 36-30 win over the Bengaluru Bulls in Hyderabad on Saturday. Haryana Steelers beat Tamil Thalaivas 61-38 in the second match.

Axelsen to meet Ginting for the top honours

World No. 1 Viktor Axelsen will take on Anthony Ginting for the men's singles title in the badminton World Tour Finals in Bangkok.

The results (semifinals): Men: Viktor Axelsen (Den) bt Kodai Naraoka (Jpn) 21-23, 21-19, 21-18; Anthony Ginting (Ina) bt Jonatan Christie (Ina) 21-15, 11-21, 21-18. **Women:** Akane Yamaguchi (Jpn) bt Chen Yufei (Chn) 21-19, 21-10; Tai Tzu Ying (Tpe) bt He Bing Jiao (Chn) 21-18, 21-14.

India wins eight medals at junior World wushu meet

India finished with a record eight medals, including three gold, at the 8th junior World wushu championship in Tangerang, Indonesia.

The winners: Gold: Aryan (42kg boys), Dhruv (53kg boys); Nitish Nagar (56kg boys); **Silver:** Kakyuki (60kg boys), Dhruv (48kg boys), Himanshi (60kg girls); **Bronze:** Anirudh Choudhary (80kg boys), Aayra Hasan Chisti (48kg).

Churchill Brothers puts it across Sudeva Delhi

Sudeva Delhi FC lost 2-0 to Churchill Brothers in the I-League here on Saturday. Abdoulaye Sane and Lamgoulen Hangshing scored for Churchill.

Tejas' all-round show helps Karnataka take the lead

K.A. Tejas (53 n.o. & 5/53) helped Karnataka secure the first-innings lead in a drawn Vijay Merchant U-16 Trophy encounter against Bengal in Jamtha.

The scores: Karnataka 349/9 decl. in 142.5 overs (Siddesh A. Asalkar 37, Arnav Mishra 135, Akshath Prabhakar 52, K.A. Tejas 53 n.o., Samyak Vellalore 27, Ayush Sahai 3/91, Shivam Bharati 3/73) drew with Bengal 311 in 119.5 overs (Aditya Roy 30, Agniswar Das 49, Rohit Pradhan 132, Ayush Sahai 36, K.A. Tejas 5/53, R. Himesh 3/69).

Achinta withdraws from World weightlifting c'ships

Achinta Sheuli withdrew from the men's 73kg class after a hamstring pull at the World weightlifting championships in Bogota on Friday.

LIVE TELECAST

Australia vs West Indies: 2nd Test, day 4, Sony LIV, 9.30 a.m.

Pakistan vs England: 2nd Test, day 3, Sony LIV, 10.30 a.m.

BWF World Tour Finals: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Voot Select, 11.30 a.m.

IRL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 2 p.m.

I-League: Eurosport (SD & HD), 2 & 4.30 p.m.

Tennis Premier League: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 5 p.m.

India Women vs Australia Women: 2nd T20I, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 7 p.m.

ISL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 7.30 p.m.

Joshna and Abhay take the top honours

The former uses her vast experience to claim record 19th title; latter picks up his maiden crown after rallying to beat Velavan in the final

NATIONAL SQUASH

K. Keerthivasan
CHENNAI

Joshna Chinappa kept her date with destiny by bagging a record 19th title while Abhay Singh won his maiden crown in the HCL-78th senior National squash championships here on Saturday.

Joshna, seeded No. 1, overcame a strong challenge from Anahat Singh, the second seed, 11-8, 11-9, 11-9 in the final, with assured court-coverage and precise shot execution.

Abhay, the men's top seed, powered past S. Velavan (5/8) 11-13, 11-7, 11-6, 11-4 in the summit clash.

Best on show: Abhay and Joshna with their reward for emerging on top. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Power-packed show

A composed Joshna attacked with power and used her vast experience to deceive the 14-year-old.

In all three games, the 36-year-old took a sizeable lead only to find Anahat come back strongly.

Anahat fought for every point, showing her skills all around the court with delicate drops, forehand and backhand winners. But in the end, Joshna was too good on the day.

Great feeling

"She played a fearless game and handled the pressure well. I remembered my first finals against Vaidehi Reddy, in the 2000 Nationals here, as a 14-year-old. It feels great," said Joshna.

Velavan, playing in his first final, did well to save four game points to win the first game against Abhay. But the 24-year-old, who had won three PSA titles this year, came back strongly, pushing his Statemate to both sides of court and finishing the points with backhand crosscourt placements and forehand flourishes.

"Winning the Nationals was a dream for me and winning it in my first final is great. It is certainly my biggest win and very special," said Abhay.

Grayson expects BFC to return to form

ISL-9

Sports Bureau
KOCHI

Kerala Blasters is on a four-game winning streak while Bengaluru FC, which it plays in the ISL at the Nehru Stadium here on Sunday, is on the ninth rung in the 11-team table.

However, Bengaluru head coach Simon Grayson feels the rivalry against Blasters is a good opportunity for his team to return to form.

"This is one of the fixtures that, when I first arrived in India, everyone spoke about. Given the rivalry between the clubs, the number of fans that are going to be there, and now it has added the spice that they are in good form and we are looking to get back to winning," he said.

"So it's something I am excited about and I am sure the players are as well."

"If you look at the rankings, of course you see a different situation, but I think our opponent is one of the league's best teams," said Vukomanovic, the Blasters head coach, on Saturday.

R. Raghupathi Reddy Memorial Cup for Lagos

RACING

HYDERABAD: Trainer D. Netto's Lagos, ridden by Deepak Singh, claimed the R. Raghupathi Reddy Memorial Cup, the feature event of Saturday's (Dec. 10) races. The winner is owned by M/s. S. Pathy & B.E. Vasanth Kumar.

1. DINDI DAM PLATE (1,400m), Maiden, 3-y-o and upward, rated upto 25 (Cat. III): **MASTER TOUCH** (Md. Ismail) 1, Ar Superior (Santosh Raj) 2, My Way Or Highway (Mohit Singh) 3 and It's My Life (B. Nikhil) 4. 2-1/2, Nk and Hd. 1m 28.00s. ₹45 (w), 12, 14 and 11 (p). SHP: 37, THP: 58, SHW: 22 and 22, FP: 207, Q: 91, Tanala: 353. Favourite: My Way Or Highway.
Owners: Mr. A.K. Jaiswal & Mr. Mirza Ayub Baig. Trainer: S.S.F. Hassan.

2. TRIBUTE PLATE (1,200m), rated up to 25 (Cat. III): **ITS ON** (D.S. Deora) 1, Astronaut (Mukesh Kumar) 2, Good Tidings (Akshay Kumar) 3 and Space Time (B. Nikhil) 4. 5, Nk and 5-1/4. 1m 12.51s. ₹23 (w), 10, 13 and 13 (p). SHP: 42, THP: 41, SHW: 18 and 20, FP: 113, Q: 70, Tanala: 238. Favourite: Its On.
Owners: Mr. Rohit Gupta rep. Rolli Stud Dairy & Agri. Farm & Mr. Rajeev Sharma. Trainer: Magan Singh.

3. BAKRANANGAL PLATE (DIV. I) (1,400m) Maiden, 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): N R I **ULTRAPOWER** (Akshay Kumar) 1, Power Ranger (R.S. Jodha) 2, Arrowtown (Mukesh Kumar) 3 and Varenna (Afroz Khan) 4. 2-1/4, 3/4 and 1/2. 1m 27.04s. ₹30 (w), 14, 14 and 18 (p). SHP: 57, THP: 44, SHW: 17 and 54, FP: 268, Q: 158, Tanala: 1,405. Favourite: Bien Pensant.
Owner: Mr. Ravinder Reddy Male. Trainer: R.H. Sequeira.

4. KAWAL TIGER RESERVE PLATE (1,400m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): ANGELITA (Afroz Khan) 1, Exclusive Luck (B. Nikhil) 2, Southern Act (Md. Ismail) 3 and Reining Queen (P. Ajeeth Kumar) 4. Not run: Take Me As I Am. 6-1/4, Nk and 1/2. 1m 26.29s. ₹21 (w), 14, 20 and 13 (p). SHP: 50, THP: 45, SHW: 14 and 29, FP: 114, Q: 86, Tanala: 963. Favourite: Angelita.
Owners: Mr. Syed Abdul Subhan. Trainer: Mir Faiyaz Ali Khan.

5. BAKRANANGAL PLATE (DIV. II) (1,400m) Maiden, 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): **WANDRING WARRIOR** (Mukesh Kumar) 1, Clefairy (Santosh Raj) 2, Visionary (Neeraj) 3 and Lady Danger (D.S. Deora) 4. 1-1/4, 1/2 and 5. 1m, 26.14s. ₹14 (w), 10, 11 and 13 (p). SHP: 23, THP: 32, SHW: 10 and 17, FP: 26, Q: 20, Tanala: 56. Favourite: Wandring Warrior.
Owner: Mr. Suchit Jayraj Shah. Trainer: Jasbir Singh.

6. R. RAGHUPATHI REDDY MEMORIAL CUP (1,400m), rated 80 and above (Cat. I): **LAGOS** (Deepak Singh) 1, Corfe Castle (Mukesh Kumar) 2, Watch My Stride (Akshay Kumar) 3 and Super Angel (Abhay Singh) 4. 2, Nk and 2. 1m, 23.99s. ₹56 (w), 18, 12 and 17 (p). SHP: 48, THP: 40, SHW: 33 and 22, FP: 198, Q: 81, Tanala: 345. Favourite: Corfe Castle.
Owners: M/s. S. Pathy & B.E. Vasanth Kumar. Trainer: D. Netto.

7. ZOOM ZOOM PLATE (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): **INDIAN TEMPLE** (B. Nikhil) 1, Glimmer Of Hope (Gaurav Singh) 2, Castlerock (Mukesh Kumar) 3 and Golden Forza (Kuldeep S) 4. 2-1/4, 1/2 and 2-1/4. 1m, 12.05s. ₹62 (w), 20, 17 and 11 (p). SHP: 40, THP: 56, SHW: 38 and 15, FP: 394, Q: 128, Tanala: 933. Favourite: Castlerock.
Owner: Mr. Suchit Jayraj Shah. Trainer: Jasbir Singh.

Jackpot: 70%: ₹9,762 (37 tkts.) and 30%: 302 (512 tkts.).

Mini Jackpot: (i) 1,398 (37 tkts.), (ii) 2,882 (34 tkts.).

Treble: (i) 552 (95 tkts.), (ii) 674 (115 tkts.).

Athletics legend Usha takes charge as IOA president

Kamesh Srinivasan
NEW DELHI

Athletic ace P.T. Usha expressed happiness about heading the Executive Council of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) with "all sports people" as she took charge as the President at the IOA Bhawan here on Saturday.

Announcing the results after the election, which was basically for four executive council member spots and one joint secretary, as the rest were taken unopposed, the Returning Officer, Umesh Sinha wished luck for the new panel to take Indian sports to greater heights.

"Except for 13 years, I have done sports all my life, be it as an athlete, coach or in administration. I never thought that I would become the IOA Chief or a Member of Parliament. The members of the athletes commission pushed me to file my nomination. We will make a collective effort for the betterment of sports, so that our tricolour flies high in the international arena. We will work with the national federations, athletes and coaches to bring more medals for the country", said PT Usha, as she addressed the media.

New dawn: IOA president P.T. Usha, flanked by senior vice-president Ajay Patel, right, and joint secretary Kalyan Chaubey, addresses the media on Saturday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

She assured that the IOA would be easily accessible to all athletes.

Double Olympic medallist P.V. Sindhu was equally elated about Usha decorating the top post. She recalled sitting on the lap of Usha as a kid and said that she took another photo in the morning to post as "then and now" on the social media.

"I am happy to continue as an athlete. It is good to know what is going on. I will do my best to help them", said Sindhu.

Another Olympic medallist and vice president of IOA, Gagan Narang said that the effort would be to make it memorable for everyone and "take sport to the next level".

The president of the All India Football Federation (AIFF), and the joint secretary of IOA, Kalyan Chaubey fielded most of the questions from the media and stated that the Executive committee would meet soon to plan the short-term and long-term work to be done.

He pointed out that people from different sports and from different strata of society made the IOA Executive Council, with most having played sports, and that it was a very healthy way forward for Indian sports.

Ms. Nita Ambani, IOC member from India and Chairperson of Reliance Foundation congratulated Usha. "It gives me immense joy to welcome P.T. Usha as the first woman President of the IOA. I remember watching her with pride as she represented our country and won laurels. She has been a towering inspiration to millions as an athlete, and I am sure she will shine in this new role as well," said Ms. Ambani.

The office-bearers:

President: P.T. Usha; **Sr. Vice President**: Ajay Patel; **Vice Presidents**: Rajlaxmi Singh Deo, Gagan Narang; **Treasurer**: Sahdev Yadav; **Joint Secretaries**: Alaknanda Ashok, Kalyan Chaubey.

Executive Council members:Amitabh Sharma, Bhupender Singh Bajwal, Lt. Gen. Harpal Singh, Rohit Rajpal; Dola Banerjee (SOM-F), Yogeshwar Dutt (SOM-M).

Athletes' Commission Members: Mary Kom, Sharath Kamal.

SNAPSHOTS

Unadkat, Abhimanyu in India Test squad

Left-arm pacer Jaydev Unadkat and batter Abhimanyu Easwaran have been called up as replacements for the injured Mohammed Shami and Rohit Sharma for the upcoming Test series in Bangladesh.

El Khayati is Chennaiyin's hero

Abdenasser El Khayati's hat-trick powered Chennaiyin FC to a thumping 7-3 win over NEUFC in an ISL contest at Guwahati on Saturday.

Chennaiyin stays seventh with 13 points from nine games while NEUFC is rooted to the bottom after losing all its nine matches.

In another match at Margao, FC Goa ended its losing streak and broke Odisha FC's winning run with a comfortable 3-0 victory.

The win took Goa from sixth to fifth (15 from nine) while Odisha was fourth (18 in nine).

The results:

At Margao: FC Goa 3 (Fernandes 74, Sadaoui 78, Vazquez 90) bt Odisha 0.

At Guwahati: NEUFC 3 (Jordan 36-pen, Philippoteaux 73, Rochharzela 90+5) lost to Chennaiyin FC 7 (El Khayati 11, 40 & 48, Sliskovic 45 & 57, Duker 68, Zoherliana 79-og).

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

St. Joseph's Indian HS emerges victorious

St. Joseph's Indian High School defeated Ebenezer International School by 28 runs in the final to win the Gopalan Challenge Cup under-16 inter-school tournament.

The scores: St. Joseph's Indian High School 180/9 in 30 overs (Rithwik Gowda 43, Tejas Reddy 44, Abhay Surya 25, Neel M. Jain 26, Shamanth 3/39) bt Ebenezer International School 152 in 28.5 overs (Aryan 44, Vedant Kumar 29, Prasad 3/31).

Sporting Club Bengaluru crowned champion

Sporting Club Bengaluru emerged the BDFA Super Division League champion in its debut season after FC Bengaluru United blew its chance on the final day of action here on Saturday. Up against Kickstart FC, FCBU (45 points) needed just a draw to defend the title it won last year. But it lost 1-3 to hand SC Bengaluru (46 points) the trophy.

The results: MEG & Center FC 1 (Shaik Muzeeb 9) drew with ASC & Center FC 1 (Tongbram KrishnaKanta 85); Kickstart FC 3 Jairo Rodrigues (OG) 5, Prince Will Emeke 72, 90+1) bt FC Bengaluru United 1 (Irfan Yadawd 68).

Champion: The Sporting Club Bengaluru team with its reward. K. MURALI KUMAR

Shashank, Ayushi claim under-13 titles

Shashank Keshav Rao and Ayushi B.Godse emerged the under-13 boys' and girls' champions respectively at the CVL Shastry Memorial Karnataka State TT Championship here on Saturday.

The results: U-13: Boys: Shashank Keshav Rao bt N. Aarnav 11-8, 7-11, 11-9, 11-1, 11-8; **girls:** Ayushi B. Godse bt Tanishka Kapil Kalbhairav 11-4, 11-8, 11-4, 10-12, 11-9.

Hopes: Boys: Shriram Kiran bt Sudhanva G. Rao 11-9, 12-10, 12-14, 11-9; **girls:** Tanishka Kapil Kalbhairav bt Irene Anna Subhash 11-3, 11-4, 11-5.

VELS varsity triumphs

VELS University, Chennai secured first place in the South Zone inter-university men's kabaddi championship recently. Mangalore was second, followed by SRM IST and Mysuru.

No place for Karun in Ranji squad

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

For the first time since he made his debut in 2013-14, Karun Nair has been dropped from the Karnataka red-ball squad, ahead of its opening two Ranji Trophy encounters against Services and Pondicherry here in Bengaluru.

The 31-year-old, only the second Indian Test batter to score a triple-century, has had a forgettable few years. First overlooked for the white-ball formats this season, Karun now finds himself out of the reckoning in red-ball cricket too.

"Dear cricket, give me one more chance," Karun tweeted on Saturday, but with the selection panel led by Fazal Khaleel seemingly eager to build the Karnataka side for the future – as seen from the inclusions of Nikin Jose and 18-year-old Vishal Onat in the 15-man list – it may be a while until Karun is reconsidered.

This is Onat's maiden call-up and has been rewarded for this exploits in the Cooch Behar U-19 Trophy where he has scored 575 runs in five league-stage matches, with a highest score of 296.

Karun Nair. FILE PHOTO

Jose, 20, has been in splendid form of late, raking up 447 runs at an average of 55.87 in the Vijay Hazare Trophy. In the long format, he topped the batting charts in the KSCA first division league with 715 runs.

Batter Devdutt Padikkal, who is recovering from an illness, was not included while speedster Prasidh Krishna, who has been out of action because of a back injury, is yet to be declared match-fit.

The Mayank Agarwal-led side will begin its campaign against Services starting Tuesday.